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The University of Southern Mississippi

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

REGARDING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT

by

LaWanda Joy Singleton Thornton

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2012

ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

REGARDING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT

By LaWanda Joy Singleton Thornton

May 2012

Almost every school uses positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) to not only increase students' academic achievements but also their behavioral and social/emotional needs. The participants in the study were a random sample of K-12 public school teachers in the state of Mississippi; the instrumentation was a 32-question teacher perception survey.

For this study, teacher perceptions regarding PBIS were linked to five research questions. Following are the research questions with their findings with the level of significance set at the .05 level:

RQ1 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school? There was no statistically significant relationship.

RQ2 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years the teacher has experience with PBIS at the school? There was a negative, statistically significant relationship (the questions for this section were written in the negative).

RQ3 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher? There was no statistically significant relationship.

RQ4 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school? There was no statistically significant relationship.

RQ5 On which factor (the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) does the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence? The number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest influence for the Teachers' Overall/General Feelings about PBIS.

While the study indicated mostly non-significant results, it did find teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS was positive. This finding seemed to suggest teachers believed PBIS had a positive impact on students. The number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest impact when correlated with teachers' overall perception. It would seem this finding suggested the longer PBIS had been at the school, the greater impact the program had on students' outcomes.

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2012

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

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May 2012

DEDICATION

This body of work is totally and completely dedicated to my family. I must first pay tribute to my parents, Huey Percy and Alva Oatis Singleton for instilling in me such outstanding work ethics. Thank you for everything you did to alleviate some of the pressure and stress associated with striving for such an advanced degree. Please know, Mama and Daddy, that I have always wanted to make you proud. I have awesome parents; I love you both.

To my children, Joy Elizabeth and John-Xavier Emmanuel Thornton, I hope you understand why I practically lived in the library for the past three years. Now, there will be no more saying, "Mama's tired." I wanted to prepare a path for you that will one day lead you to greatness. I pray you will have the desires and wherewithal to strive for and achieve whatever your personal, family, and career goals will be. I love the two of you with every breath in my body.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my husband, Xavier LaSean Thornton. Thank you so very much for your loving support and enduring patience as I matriculated through this doctoral process. You are such a remarkable husband. We are destined for great things. I love you with all of my heart, Xav!

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To my other dissertation committee members, Dr. David Lee and Dr. Rose McNeese, I thank you both for your support and assistance as I worked on my dissertation. Please know that you both were an integral part of my committee.

I want everyone on my dissertation committee to know that you have my utmost respect. Without your serving on my dissertation committee, I would not be where I am today. Thank you for taking the time to work with me, to guide me, to mentor me, and to assist me throughout every stage of my doctoral process.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nobody denies that since former President George W. Bush and his administrative team authorized the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind, 2002), the state of education has become altered. "NCLB requires states to set challenging academic performance standards" (Linn, 2005, p. 5). Along with NCLB (2002) is the concept of schools having to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Maulding, Peters, Shelley, & Styron, 2006). Styron, Maulding, and Parker (2008) further indicate "with the mandate by the NCLB legislation that all subgroups make adequate yearly progress" (p. 59). The subgroups include such categories as students who are disabled, a minority, or come from a low socioeconomic background (Styron & Nyman, 2008).

When NCLB (2002) was established, its intent was to hold schools accountable for every student, despite the race, learning challenge, or financial situation of the student; every student should still be provided a top-notch education and make academic strides (Styron & Nyman, 2008). The initial constraints of NCLB (2002) specified by the 2013-2014 school term, "all students must be at the proficient level or above"; this requirement must be met "for schools and districts to avoid sanctions" (Linn, 2005, p. 9). Styron and Nyman (2008) indicate if a school does not achieve the specifications of NCLB (2002), then the school will be forced to establish strategies in an effort to assist students with accomplishing the goals of NCLB (2002). Linn (2005) reveals "in 2003, no state or large district had anything close to 100% of their students performing at the basic level, much less the proficient level at either grade 4 or grade 8 in either reading or

mathematics" (p. 14). With NCLB (2002) and AYP as educational factors, school districts now have a much higher accountability level (Styron et al., 2008).

Consequently, how students perform on their standardized state tests "hold schools and educators accountable both to state accountability systems and also to the accountability requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001" (Linn, 2005, p. 1). Linn (2005) asserts before NCLB (2002) was established, there were already state-mandated tests for students that held school districts accountable for their students' achievement levels. Following this further, Styron et al. (2008), specify "accountability programming requires today's administrators to develop and maintain a vision of excellence in educational service delivery, be able to successfully collaborate with teachers, parents, and community members, and provide evidence of academic improvement within each school" (p. 55).

In recent times, President Barack Obama has decided to eliminate various components of NCLB (2002). The 2014 sanction is just one of the elements President Obama is willing to waive as long as states follow the revised particulars of NCLB (2002). President Obama wants to give states more control of their educational achievements instead of states being under such stringent and sometimes unrealistic educational guidelines (Dillon, 2011; Resmovits, 2011). Resmovits (2011) makes it clear that schools and their states will continue to be held accountable just in a different manner. Arne Duncan, the current Secretary of Education, is calling for states to prove they have high-quality teachers, highly-effective teaching standards, assessments which adequately measure students' academic achievements, and evaluation tools which effectively evaluate both teachers and principals; if states have such criteria, they are able

to apply to be relieved from the NCLB (2002) specifications (Dillon, 2011). Waiver applications are due firstly in November then again in January (Murphy, 2011).

There are some lawmakers such as Republican Representative John Kline, chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, who are opposed to the new actions President Obama intends to allow Secretary of Education Duncan determine which states are able to not have the NCLB (2002) provisions enforced on them (Dillon, 2011; Resmovits, 2011; Associated Press, 2011). On the other hand, Dillon (2011) indicates the president of the National Education Association (NEA), Dennis Van Roekel views the NCLB (2002) update by President Obama and his administration as much needed and long overdue. According to Resmovits (2011) President Obama and his administration submitted their revisions of NCLB (2002) in March of 2010, but Congress has yet to adopt them; consequently, President Obama has taken it upon himself to modify NCLB (2002).

Still, other lawmakers and state education officials have not weighed in on President Obama's announcement since they have not yet had ample time to review his changes and the stipulations which accompany the waiver process (Murphy, 2011). Murphy (2011) points out the California Teachers Association views President Obama's revisions just as burdensome as Bush's NCLB (2002). Dillon (2011) does make it clear that NCLB (2002) has not been completely or totally taken away; there are still several facets of NCLB (2002) which are still in place and should be observed until either Secretary of Education Duncan waives a state from a provision, or the law is revamped altogether. Eleven states applied for a waiver; ten states actually received the waiver as recently as Thursday, February 9, 2012. The following states received the waiver:

Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Tennessee (Feller & Hefling, 2012). Because Mississippi was not one of the states that applied for and received a waiver, and the participants in the study were Mississippi teachers, the research for this study continued on the basis that NCLB (2002) is still in effect.

Pajares (1997) points out "researchers and school practitioners should look to students' self-beliefs about their academic capabilities, for they are important components of motivation, self-regulation, and academic achievement" (Pajares, 1997, Encouraging Intertheoretical Crosstalk and Collaboration section, para. 5). Additionally, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) reveals the importance of addressing the motivational needs of students. SCT is based on the concept that students need to believe they can achieve something before they attempt to strive for their goals (Bandura, 2001). Motivational and achievement goal theories have the same aims and intentions of positive behavior intervention support (PBIS), which is being incorporated in schools (Bjornebekk, 2008). The basis of PBIS is for schools to implement methods on the front end before issues arise; schools should seek to build an environment which presents positive reinforcement as opposed to reacting negatively after students have violated rules or not performed academically well (Cook, Crews, Wright, Mayer, Gale, Kraemer, & Greshman, 2007).

In recent history, several school districts have instituted a schoolwide positive behavior support (SWPBS) system which is sometimes referred to as positive behavior intervention support (PBIS). "The SWPBS framework is a multisystemic, practical approach to achieve learning and social goals while reducing disruptive behaviors in the

classroom" (Thompson & Webber, 2010, p. 72). Although SWPBS is now seen implemented in schools for all students, it actually has beginnings exclusively with special education. "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) renewed the commitment to provide behavioral support (PBS) for students that engage in persistent problem behavior" (Cook, et al., 2007, p. 191). To help foster better behavior, the special education students were provided a behavior intervention plan (PBS) which became the school's official method of keeping track of the intervention methods they were providing to the student (Cook, et al., 2007). Schools now are using SWPBS as a means for "developing schoolwide systematic strategies that teach and reinforce prosocial decision making in all students" (Thompson & Webber, 2010, p. 72).

The information that the researchers and school practitioners discover about the beliefs that students have about themselves should provide information that will better regulate educational procedures, assumptions, and guidelines (Pajares, 1997). For example, a study was conducted to evaluate the Respect program which was geared towards helping students maintain good behavior and exercise good grades. The study was conducted in Norway using three lower level schools (grades 5-7) and only one upper level setting (grades 8-10) with using information retrieved from both teachers and students. The results of the study reveal that students who receive schoolwide behavioral intervention strategies perform better than when interventions are only gauged towards a selected pupil group; the research purports the positive schoolwide method is highly effective and should continue to be implemented (Ertesvag & Vaaland, 2007). What, though, do more studies indicate regarding teachers' perceptions on varying elements and types of PBIS?

Statement of the Problem

Oftentimes, school leaders implement what they perceive to be an effective positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) for their students without assessing the effects of the behavioral, social, and academic intervention strategies (Cook, et al., 2007). The PBIS systems need to be reviewed in some manner to determine their credibility; if they are not, this lack of evaluation creates disconnects that could negatively impact students (Cook, et al., 2007).

This study called for school leaders to evaluate their school's (PBIS) by gauging teachers' perceptions of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS). Seeking the opinion of the teachers provided school leaders with data to help monitor and adjust the components of the school's PBIS. This study addressed the perception that teachers have regarding the impact of positive behavior intervention support on students' daily average attendance, students' major discipline incidents (fighting, verbal and non verbal threats, and articles prohibited in school such as tobacco and alcohol products), students' dropout rates, the percentage of students passing standardized state tests, and teachers' overall or general perception about PBIS.

In the past ten years, there has been a "national movement toward universal, classroom, and individual management systems provided by the schoolwide positive behavior support (SWPBS) system"; additionally, SWPBS has allowed school leaders and teachers to tackle behavioral issues "in a proactive and positive manner" (Thompson & Webber, 2010, p. 72). The areas of interest that were investigated concerning the teachers who completed the survey included the following factors: the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school,

the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. Teachers have a direct line of contact and communication with the students on a constant, daily basis. Discovering the perception that teachers have regarding PBIS is an essential component to having a successful experience (Gorgueiro, 2008).

Administrators may find it problematic if the teachers' perception of the school's positive behavior intervention support system is a negative one. If the perception is negative and the administrators do not address this issue, then the students will suffer. Administrators may continue to believe that the PBIS methods at their schools are having a tremendous, positive impact on the students; however, the perception of the teachers is totally opposite. Because teachers will be the frontrunners of PBIS at their schools, it is vital to gauge their perception of PBIS since their outlook will influence their students' perception (Gorgueiro, 2008).

If the study shows teachers' perceptions of the impact of positive behavior intervention support as little or no impact, then the administrators may benefit by meeting with the teachers to discuss the findings of the survey to adjust and realign the school's PBIS program so that it produces the greatest benefit for the students. Even though there is "extensive amounts of research on SWPBS," Thompson and Webber (2010) declare there are "few strategies that use data to compare teacher and student perceptions of school expectations and develop goals to facilitate behavioral improvements" (p. 72).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate Mississippi K-12 teachers' perception of positive behavior intervention regarding the following outcomes of students: daily average attendance, major discipline incidents (fighting, verbal and non

verbal threats, and articles prohibited in school such as tobacco and alcohol products), dropout rates, and the percentage of students passing standardized state tests. There is a link "between school climate and positive student outcomes, such as improved academic achievement and reduced discipline problems"; as a result, "school climate is often a target of school improvement initiatives and programs aiming to promote positive outcomes for students and staff" (Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010, p. 272). Likewise, Mitchell et al.(2010) propose "that a multilevel perspective on school climate may be most instructive for identifying characteristics of the individual and school environment that influence student and teacher perceptions of climate" (p. 272).

This study was necessary because "additional work is needed to identify how and under what circumstances PBIS and other such schoolwide initiatives are able to improve the school environment for both students and staff" (Mitchell, et al., 2010, p. 278). Moreover, NCLB (2002) has caused schools to revamp the methods they once used; now, school leaders are seeking methods and practices which have been researched to aid them with meeting their accountability measures (Johnson, 2002; Love, 2002). Based on the perception of both students and staff, there are some PBIS that have altered the climate of schools. With this in mind, "findings underscore the importance of assessing both student and teacher perceptions in order to better understand school climate, especially when monitoring the outcomes of school improvement initiatives" (Mitchell, et al., 2010, p. 278).

Research Questions

For this study, the perceptions that the teachers have were linked to the following research questions:

RQ1 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school?

RQ2 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school?

RQ3 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher?

RQ4 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school?

RQ5 On which factor (the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) does the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence?

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were as follows:

H1 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school.

H2 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school.

H3 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher.

H4 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school.

H5 The greatest influence is the relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school.

Definition of Terms

The terms that are defined below were used in this study; the definitions provide meaning as the terms relate to the research conducted for this study.

Accountability systems consist of the standards, objectives, subject matter, and tests that school districts implement with specific framework guidance from their state department of education to meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (Linn, 2005).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accounts for the amount of progress students make every year they are in school (Maulding et al., 2006).

Agentic self-determination is "an emergent capability of developing persons" (Martin, 2004, p. 139).

Agency regards "the capability of individual human beings to make choices and to act on these choices in ways that make a difference in their lives" (Martin, 2004, p. 135). Martin (2004) suggests, "emphasis on the agency of learners is especially prevalent in contributions to self-regulation that have been developed in accordance with the social cognitive theorizing of Albert Bandura" (p. 135).

Behavioral intervention plans (PBS) "serve as legal documents that help guide the implementations of intervention strategies to encourage more positive forms of behavior" (Cook, et al., 2007, p. 191).

The Boys Town Education Model (BTEM) is a program that is designed to assist students with developing their prosocial skills and to formulate positive bonds between adults and youth (Dowd & Tierney, 1995).

Efficacy is the judgment one has about having the capabilities to follow a plan to achieve a particular goal (Goddard & Hoy, 2004).

Collective efficacy "refers to the perceptions of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can execute the courses of action necessary to have positive effects on students" (Goddard, 2001, p. 467).

Major Discipline Infractions For the purposes of this study, the researcher considers major discipline infractions to involve such actions as fighting, verbal and non-verbal threats, and articles prohibited in school such as tobacco and alcohol products.

Motivation theory suggests "motivated behavior was thought to depend on the magnitude of bodily needs multiplied by the strength of pertinent behavioral patterns that had been strengthened by rewards" (Weiner, 2010, p. 28).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a mandated law by former President George W. Bush in his efforts to establish educational standards for students (Maulding, et al., 2006).

Near Peer comprises of a member of a national service corps group who is trained for "providing attendance monitoring, tutoring and mentoring, and homework support" for students (Balfanz, 2011, p. 57).

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is a school-wide system with strategies that focus on bettering such areas as students' behavior, attendance, and academic achievement (Anderson-Kechmark & Alvarez, 2010).

Response To Intervention (RTI) "was initially conceived as a prevention framework providing early intervention to students at risk of reading failure" (Mellard, Stern, & Woods, 2011, p. 1).

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a guide aimed at improving students' behavioral, academic, and social behaviors (Thompson & Webber, 2010).

School climate "is established as interest, concern, and support for all students" (Halawah, 2005, p. 337).

School culture consists of "shared vision, values, goals, beliefs, and faith in school organizations" (Roby, 2011, p. 783).

Self-efficacy deals with the beliefs students have about themselves as well as the beliefs teachers have about themselves (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2006).

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is the basis of Bandura's theory that "understands agentic capability as self-determination exercised as self-regulation, the most volitional component of which is self-efficacy" (Martin, 2004, p. 139).

Student self-efficacy involves "students' perceptions of self-capability to organize and execute the actions requited to attain success in various subjects are predictive of differences in academic achievement" (Goddard, 2001, p. 468).

Transactional leadership is "a reliance on contingent rewards to induce subordinate performance" (Vecchio, Justin, & Pearce, 2008).

Delimitations

This study included only a random sample of teachers who teach at public schools in the state of Mississippi. Every effort was be made to include a sampling of teachers from various public school systems in Mississippi with no regard to such information as

the socioeconomic make-up of the students or the overall academic state rating of the school. The public school must, however, have participated in some form of a positive behavior intervention support in order for its teachers to complete the survey.

Assumptions

All the participants for the survey received the survey in a timely manner. When the participants responded to the survey, they provided honest answers.

Justification

This study was needed because school leaders are constantly researching to determine the tactics that are implemented at schools with sustainable student achievement. With the legislation of NCLB (2002), many principals are under a heavy amount of pressure to achieve and maintain student achievement; consequently, principals need research-based data that will help them with their quest for greater student achievement (Chrisman, 2005). NCLB (2002) legislation mandated that schools that are underperforming increase their students' achievement. Every school is held accountable for students' performances on standardized state tests. In addition to that, each school must demonstrate AYP as well (NCLB, 2002). Even though President Obama has made recent changes to NCLB (2002), schools are still being held to high standards and must show evidence of how they are improving their students' achievement gaps and the like (Dillon, 2011).

A study conducted in California wanted to investigate how schools were able to maintain academic success. The study focused on test scores, the climate of the schools, and interview results from teachers and principals (Chrisman, 2005). The results of the study indicated "improved student achievement seems to be the product of how well a

school operates and depends on the quality of leadership and the effectiveness of instructional programs and practices" (Chrisman, 2005, p. 17). Moreover, Preble and Taylor (2008) along with their colleagues from Main Street Academix and some of the students from New England College have conducted investigations on the concept of school climate, and the findings from the studies have provided school leaders with information to improve their schools. Their study included both qualitative and quantitative data with regards to school climate as school leaders use data to determine their areas of needs as well as strengths (Preble & Taylor, 2008). Preble and Taylor (2008) also have worked to help the school community "to understand the positive and negative effects of school climate and its links to bullying, harassment, discipline systems, dropout rates, teaching practices, and teacher and student success" (p. 36).

Following this further, Mitchell et al., (2010) indicate "school climate has been linked with improved academic achievement and reduced discipline problems, and thus is often a target of school improvement initiatives" (p. 271). On the other hand, there are not many studies that have been conducted which analyze the perceptions of students and teachers in areas such as school climate (Mitchell, et al., 2010). In a study that "examined parallel models of students' and teachers' perceptions of overall school climate and academic emphasis," the study produced results that indicate "the importance of assessing both student and teacher perceptions in future research on school climate" (Mitchell, et al., 2010, p. 271).

Summary

Bush's NCLB (2002) has caused school leaders and educators to be creative with how they are assisting students with their achievement levels. Because schools are being

held accountable to high standards (Linn, 2005) and must demonstrate AYP (Maulding et al., 2006), they are searching for methods to aid them with increasing the achievement levels of their students (Pajares, 1997). Despite President Obama's aim to make certain provisions of NCLB (2002) state and school district controlled, there still is a degree of high standards for schools to meet for the academic growth for their students (Dillon, 2011).

Reportedly, a few years after the NCLB (2002), The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (2004) was instituted, and school leaders were implementing individual behavioral interventions for their special education students (Cook, et al., 2007). Now, however, schools that once only used positive behavior plans for intervention methods for special education students are now utilizing positive behavior support in all classrooms, throughout their school; and some school districts have every school in the district implementing some form of positive behavior intervention support. With such elements as a better school climate, students believing in themselves and less behavioral issues, students are more apt to attend class on a regular basis and do well on their assignments and ultimately state tests (Thompson & Webber, 2010). With proper training and support, schools can easily adopt a positive behavior intervention support that fits the culture and needs of its particular school.

Bandura's (2001) SCT sets the tone to challenge educators and school leaders to nurture their students' inner beliefs about their achievement goals (Bandura, 2001). Students tend to excel with motivation and tactics that are presented in a more positive manner as opposed to those punishments and consequences that are delved out when students misbehave or do not excel as their teachers expect them to do. School systems

should have a focus on enhancing the beliefs students have about themselves and discovering what motivates students to do well academically and behave in an acceptable manner (Pajares, 1997). The perception of the positive behavior intervention support currently in place at the schools has a critical need to be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the strategies based on the perception of the teachers. The teachers are the direct link to students on a regular basis and having the teachers' insight and thoughts will enable school districts to evaluate their intervention strategies in order to adjust weak areas and continue with the strong areas. Mitchell et al. (2010) suggest to assess not only the perception of the teachers but also to assess the perception of the students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In Chapter II, there are several topics that are discussed. The beginning of the chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the basis of this study. Next, a brief review of the literature is shared. The remaining sections of Chapter II detail the following literary subjects: school climate, school culture, efficacy, motivation theory, response to intervention, positive behavior intervention support, dropout prevention, and perception.

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which indicates unless people believe they can give the outcome that is desired, they will not have the motivation to strive to meet the intended goal (Bandura, 2001). The social-cognitive achievement goal theory was prevalent in the latter part of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s. According to Thompson and Webber (2010) the techniques that school systems use to address the positive educational and social outcomes they wish to receive from their students are based on Bandura's theory of social learning. The basis of the social learning theory provides guidelines on how to approach the manner in which students behave (Thompson & Webber, 2010).

The social-cognitive achievement goal theory "became the benchmark of motivation psychology" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 158). Somers, Owens, and Piliawsky (2009) contend students entering high school are at an extremely crucial educational point in their lives. Most high school freshmen have a desire to complete high school;

however, cognitive development theory suggests students at that age do not always possess the necessary cognitive skills to make their desire to complete high school come to fruition. The social-cognitive processes have been included when motivational research is conducted.

For example, the social-cognitive processes can be identified in the achievement goal theory. "According to the theory, goals serve as a driving force and are connected to intention, purpose conception, attribution and/or planning, rather than to aspiration, affect, energy, activation and/or desire" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 154). Several researchers now incorporate affect in their achievement goal theory studies. In the same way, "they have also identified achievement motives and temperaments as antecedents of and an energysing force behind achievement goals" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 154). Bjornebekk (2008) goes on to indicate "several motivation theoreticians consider goals to be decisive for the control of action in a given situation because they serve as channels for the energy that is triggered by more general dispositions" (p. 162).

Some cognitive theoreticians have not given emotion or affect much consideration; recently, though, "an increasing number of cognitive psychologists have directed their interest towards emotion" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 154). Social cognitivism has been for several decades the concept of theoretical focus. Created in 1979 and developed and based on research and the results of data, the Boys Town Education Model (BTEM), shares similar ideals of social learning theories as well as applied behavior (Sarason, 1970). The BTEM was instituted as the needs of the Family Teaching Model (FTM) increased (Connolly, Dowd, Criste, Nelson, & Tobias, 1995). According to Connolly et al. (1995), the FTM focused on practices for teachers, social skills for

students, and positive relationships between youth and adults. Additionally, the FTM was a version of the Achievement Place Model of the mid-1970s. The Achievement Place Model was created at the University of Kansas; this model outlined the skills that needed to be taught and a method to determine how effectively the skills were taught (Phillips, Phillips, Fixen, & Wolf, 1974). Currently, the main focus of the BTEM is to assist students with developing their prosocial skills and to formulate positive bonds between adults and youth (Dowd, & Tierney, 1995).

In recent years, more research is being conducted on motivational theories and achievement goal theories. Bjornebekk (2008) further indicates "other researchers have also gradually directed their attention towards affect" (p. 154). Additionally, "studies have concentrated on social cognitive processes when analysing those factors that determine and maintain performance-related behaviour" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 153). The new research "has led to the identification of approach and avoidance temperaments as antecedents of and the energizing force behind motive dispositions, which, in turn, have an influence on goals" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 153). House (1996) revised his path-goal theory in 1996 in which he "developed a number of propositions that are intended to both clarify and extend the theory, and thereby hopefully revitalize research on the theory" (Vecchio, et al., 2008, p. 71). Vecchio et al. (2008) point out "House proposed that transactional leadership (i.e. a reliance on contingent rewards to induce subordinate performance) is exercised when leaders utilize extrinsic rewards in order to exert influence" (p. 72).

Christenson and Thurlow (2004) point out how paying attention to students' cognitive and psychological engagement is relative to students' remaining in school.

Students who exercise a sense of wanting to learn because they believe they can feel good about school. In addition to that, when students perceive they are an integral part of the school, and they have good connections with other students at the school as well as with their teachers, students tend to exercise a manner of connectivity (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Bjornebekk (2008) goes on to point out "a central hypothesis of classical motivation theory is that affect underlies motivation and its [behavioral] manifestations" (p. 153).

Although response to intervention (RTI) is used to help meet the guidelines mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002), "RTI was initially conceived as a prevention framework providing early intervention to students at risk of reading failure" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 1). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (IDEA, 2004) has compelled schools to incorporate a response to intervention that addresses the needs of students before students have failed (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010). The concept of RTI has played a role in "the identification of specific learning disabilities (SLD)" which has lead to it becoming an essential element of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 1). RTI soon became a concept that reached beyond just reading; it could be seen in "all academic content areas, as well as behavior" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 1). In addition to that, RTI "became so prevalent that it was used to identify students at risk of academic or behavioral failure throughout elementary, middle, and high school" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 1).

There are some noteworthy RTI models that are "evidence-based RTI models" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 3). More research has been conducted on RTI models at

elementary schools as opposed to the RTI models beyond the elementary school level. The research conducted on the RTI models does not indicate one model as being the best; the RTI models are all generally alike with slight differences. The differences in the RTI models will be what make educational leaders select it because the difference may be what its educational setting needs (Mellard, et al., 2011).

School districts and even some states are implementing some form of positive behavior support (PBS) or positive behavior intervention support (PBIS). This implementation is due in part because there is research that suggests it is vital to have an approach in place before students succumb to academic failure or behavioral mishaps. Furthermore, "schools have found that PBIS provides a comprehensive model for implementation of a continuum of interventions that result in better outcomes for students" (Anderson-Kechmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 61). Anderson-Ketchmark and Alvarez (2010) specify differences between RTI and PBIS with the following description:

> Although both PBIS and RTI are represented by a three-tiered triangle (a continuum of schoolwide, small-group, and individual services), RTI represents the broader concept that addresses both academics and behavior (tier 1 universal supporters, tier 2 targeted group intervention, tier 3 intensive individual interventions), whereas PBIS provides a model for the continuum of services (primary, secondary, tertiary) that can be provided to address behavior. (p. 61)

It is important to note that "PBIS is not a manualized program, but a framework for the delivery of prevention and intervention services" (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 61).

Literature

There is an abundant amount of literature that describes various positive behavior intervention support methods that schools use to improve student achievement. For example, Marzano (2003) has created a What Works in Schools model. In Marzano's model, he pinpoints particular “factors that are primary determinants of student achievement” (Pool, 2005, p. 96). Other available resources aimed at improving student achievement include Schools Moving Up, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University (Pool, 2005).

Furthermore, a book entitled *The Little Prince* is hailed as being “the foundation of all healthy school cultures” (Rooney, 2005, p. 86). In fact, the greatest advancement in student achievement will occur if teachers and administrators collaborate. Although the principals should steer everyone involved in developing a positive school climate, the principals need to involve the teachers in the process as well (Halawah, 2005). Moreover, the students should truly suppose their principal and teachers are genuinely involved in helping them reach success. As a consequence, all of the stakeholders should play a part in developing and maintaining a positive school culture (Halawah, 2005). Collaborative active research has been credited with improving schools (Preble & Taylor, 2008).

Additionally, Pool (2005) claims student achievement will occur if there is a focus on "listening, watching, observing, collaborating, and monitoring” (p. 96). Osher and Fleischman (2005) further emphasize “positive behavioral supports” as a vital element of school culture (p. 84). Halawah (2005) establishes “there is a relationship between positive school climate and increased student achievement” (p. 336).

School Climate

Research on school climate will increase awareness of "programs, interventions, and professional development opportunities" which are specifically designed to increase student achievement (Chrisman, 2005, p. 18). According to Preble and Taylor (2008), whether the climate of the school is negative or positive, that climate will have an influence on particular areas such as discipline, the dropout rate, and the achievement of the students. Schools that have a healthy school climate have the ability "to foster student learning and build healthy relationships among everyone in the school" (Rooney, 2005, p. 86).

"The school climate is established as interest, concern, and support for all students" (Halawah, 2005, p. 337). Principals who are effective leaders work to create settings at their schools that are conducive to the overall success of students. Students are more receptive to learning when the environment at the school mimics a positive climate (Cotton, 2004). It is up to the principal to lead the way with establishing a setting that is open and inviting for the teachers and the students. The teachers and students should feel comfortable when there is a need to talk to the principal; with that notion in mind, the principal should possess exemplary people skills in order to handle matters which deal with both praise and punishment. Having the ability to communicate well with others at school and fostering the same beliefs and values help to create a school climate that is positive and engaging (Halawah, 2005).

According to Halawah (2005), a school climate that is negative or strained, will have a negative impact on the way the students behave, and how they learn in the classroom; in addition to that, a poor school climate will decrease the effectiveness of the

ability for the teachers to deliver effective classroom instruction. If principals want their students to grow and succeed, then the principals have the task of seeking methods that will be helpful to attain goals that have been set by the school and its district (Halawah, 2005).

Some schools are pursuing student achievement by executing "student-led action research process to guide school improvement" (Preble & Taylor, 2008, p. 36). Ozer, Cantor, Cruz, Fox, Hubbard, and Moret (2008) point out there is a lot of research that supports students leading the way with action research. Also, Preble and Taylor (2008) insist on utilizing "student-led action research" with the notion if students exercise "ownership and control," they can be beneficial with identifying problem areas and then bringing about school improvement (p. 37). Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward, and Green (2003) go on to indicate including students in the action research makes the students feel connected to the school and enhances the entire climate of the school.

In fact, Sullivan County Schools put a student-led action research process in place at their schools in an effort to improve student achievement; consequently, "after four years, about two thirds of the schools in Sullivan County had made significant, measurable improvements in school climate" (Preble & Taylor, 2008, p. 39). The results found in the Sullivan County Schools were comparable to the findings as communicated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2008). The review focused on the relationship between student achievement and school climate thereby affirming "when school climate measures go up, students' performance on statewide tests in reading, mathematics, and writing also goes up" (Preble & Taylor, 2008, p. 40).

Preble and Taylor (2008) reveal as the climate of the school changed for the better, the achievement rates of the students improved as well. Unquestionably, there is research that supports "school climate affects academics and school attendance" (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 61); however, there is not a lot of information in relation to how the communication between the principal and the teachers influences the climate of the school (Halawah, 2005).

School Culture

Waldron and McLeskey (2010) point out "a school culture may be defined as the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates" (p. 59). Because school culture is a school specific notion, there is no one set guideline or methodology for schools to follow when school systems are attempting to initiate a change of school culture. Still, the process of revamping the culture of a school is an arduous and time-consuming undertaking (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). One of the most important steps with altering the culture of a school involves having the stakeholders jointly meet and assess the current methodology used by teachers in their quest to meet the educational goals for their students (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). When all stakeholders such as the regular education teachers, special education teachers, and counselors are involved in discussions geared towards improving the education of each and every type of student, then the interest and commitment levels are augmented for everyone involved in the process (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Along those same lines, teachers will want to grow professionally, enhance the manner used to present material to their students, and have a better feeling about their workplace performance (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). School improvement has been

the focal point of a tremendous amount of research within the past ten years due to educational policies such as IDEA (2004) and NCLB (2002). Teachers are exercising different instructional strategies to advance the achievement levels of all their students. Waldron and McLeskey (2010) suggest schools that implement initiatives which include every student, regardless of any educational challenges, tend to have effective school systems.

Utilizing the concepts of a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) brings about great results (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). The components of an effective CSR include the following:

1. collaborative school culture,
2. professional development designed to improve teachers' instructional delivery, and
3. on-going support from administrative staff and other stakeholders associated with the school (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Following is an example of a school that has facilitated a positive school culture; the exact name of the school has been changed to protect its anonymity (Rooney, 2005). The culture of the school is evident immediately upon walking through the front doors of the school. Louis Pasteur is an elementary school whose school culture is depicted as one that is student-centered. The hall, wall, and bulletin boards display an array of artwork completed by students. The secretary is friendly, and the entryway setup is welcoming. Students are seen working in various areas of the school. The principal is open and able to address students with their first names and has time to talk to teachers in the hallway (Rooney, 2005). The principal at Louis Pasteur set out to improve the achievement level

of her students; she wanted to especially focus her attention on the forty percent minority population (Rooney, 2005). Her strategies included hosting a parent night once a month. The family nights focused on the importance of reading at home and parental involvement in the happenings at school.

Also, the principal found it necessary to coordinate her efforts with the parent teacher organization because she wanted to get the members of the community heavily vested in the setting at her elementary school. Evidently, the principal's efforts were successful because the culture of the school could easily be determined by simply taking note of the happiness the students expressed and by viewing the displays throughout the school; there was an obvious feeling that all focus was on the students (Rooney, 2005).

The culture of Louis Pasteur was positive, and the school centered its attention on not only the accomplishments the students made academically but also the strong and vital connections among everyone in the school. Certainly, the standards of Louis Pasteur were evident, seen, and even felt without saying a word or asking anyone a question; the culture of the school was just that magnificently evident (Rooney, 2005). Waldron and McLeskey (2010) suggest additional research is needed to examine the knowledge gained from learning how to establish and maintain school improvement strategies that are working. CSR is only one model of school culture which strives to meet the instructional needs of all students.

According to Reeves (2007), there are four elements which need to occur if schools want to change their culture. The first element advises school leaders to "define what you will not change" (Reeves, 2007, p. 94). When attempting to improve a school's culture, not all of the usual traditions of the schools should be stricken from the school's

culture as some traditions should indeed be maintained. In effect, "effective change leaders identify and build on traditions rather than compete with them" (Reeves, 2007, p. 94). The next facet is for school leaders to "recognize the importance of actions" (Reeves, 2007, p. 94). Principals should show their personnel that they are serious about what they say they want to see occur at their schools; if the principals only talk about what they want to do but never actually put their comments into action, their personnel's "hope turns to cynicism" (Reeves, 2007, p. 94). Another component of changing a school's culture is to "use the right change tools for your school or district" (Reeves, 2007, p. 94). School leaders should ascertain what changes need to be made and determine the manner in which those changes will occur.

Furthermore, "students must believe in the faculty and feel good about what the school is doing" (Halawah, 2005, p. 335). The last factor to consider challenges school leaders to complete all of the necessary work (Reeves, 2007). Principals must actually demonstrate to their school community that they regard every position including bus drivers and cafeteria workers as an important aspect of the culture of their school. Halawah (2005) agrees with Reeves by contending "principals play an important role in establishing school discipline, both by effective administration and by personal example" (p. 334). Reeves (2007) found "meaningful school improvement begins with cultural change—and culture change begins with the school leader" (p. 95). Osher and Fleischman (2005) have noted the following information:

> Behavior research suggests that environmental changes—for example, being explicit about behavior expectations, directly teaching appropriate behavior, providing support to help students meet expectations, monitoring individual and

> school-wide behavior, and providing frequent positive reinforcement—can reduce discipline problems and help teachers and students recover instructional time. (p. 84)

There is literature that affirms principals are making strides to improve the achievement of their students by showing a direct interest in their students' well being. When schools have leaders who are directly involved in student achievement, the entire atmosphere of the school has "a sense of wholesomeness and kid-centeredness" (Rooney, 2005, p. 86). In addition to having a strong principal leadership, teacher leadership and district office leadership are also crucial for greater student achievement (Chrisman, 2005).

Chrisman (2005) reports schools that reach their achievement goals involve their teaching staff in making decisions on various educational matters such as implementing intervention strategies for students and redesigning teachers' instructional programs. Enabling teachers to make sound educational choices concerning some of the before mentioned educational matters has made students' achievement levels greater (Chrisman, 2005). For example, when the teachers at a middle school discovered that the students were struggling with reading comprehension, the teachers organized a professional development training session that was geared toward assisting teachers with helping students with their weaknesses in reading comprehension (Chrisman, 2005).

The success of the school was met because the professional development was not put in place for just reading and English teachers; the session was for all of the teachers in every department. All of the teachers in every discipline were trained on how to effectively address reading comprehension in their classrooms. As a follow-up

procedure, according to Chrisman (2005), once every teacher had instituted the newly learned reading comprehension techniques in their classroom instruction, the teachers tested the students to see if their reading comprehension levels had grown. Besides using a post training assessment on the students, the teachers became interested in learning Marzano's (2003) strategies for teaching; they also had an interest in "increasing the rigor of their instruction by asking questions that required students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate new concepts" (Chrisman, 2005, p. 18).

Waldron and McLeskey (2010) suggest particular steps to follow when establishing or altering the culture of the school, namely establishing a school culture that is decided on by all, providing teachers with opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their practices by attending and participating in professional development, and implementing strategies that are valuable to the culture of the school and are directed by not only the principal but also the teachers and students as well. Chrisman (2005) further contends when teachers are able to meet with other teachers and discuss their practices in both an informal and formal manner, they are able to participate in an exchange of ideas that will enable them to build better instructional programs for their students. This type of collaboration is used best when teachers are working on improving their instructional practices based on the achievement needs of their students (Chrisman, 2005).

By evaluating the assessment results of their students and altering their instructional patterns, teachers are exercising an action research method which assists students with their achievement gains (Chrisman, 2005). McNeely, Nonnemaker, and Blum (2002) suggest using both national and school documentation to assess the culture of the school. Moreover, Chrisman (2005) points out when teachers collaborate with one

another, they are able to exchange effective lesson plans, mentor novice teachers, and teach alongside each other.

Efficacy

According to Goddard (2001), "collective efficacy refers to the perceptions of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can execute the courses of action necessary to have positive effects on students" (p. 467). Although Bandura (2001) plead to have studies conducted on "the measurement and effects of collective efficacy, researchers have undertaken relatively few investigations of this promising construct" (Goddard, 2001, p. 467). "Collective Efficacy: A Neglected Construct in the Study of Schools and Student Achievement" is "the first study of collective efficacy to examine students' achievement on a mandatory state assessment that provides opportunities for extended written responses not found on traditional norm-referenced tests" (Goddard, 2001, p. 468). Even though more research needs to be performed concerning collective efficacy, the results of the aforementioned study indicate "differences between schools in student mathematics and reading achievement were positively related to collective efficacy" (Goddard, 2001, p. 467). Collective efficacy also includes a concept called efficacious organizations. "Efficacious organizations can tolerate pressure and crises and continue to function without severe negative consequences; in fact, they learn how to adapt and cope with disruptive forces" (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000, p. 484).

Additionally, Goddard (2001) notes "a relatively large body of research suggests that student efficacy and teacher efficacy are positively related to important educational outcomes" (p. 468). Goddard (2001) reports "in a meta-analysis of 36 studies, Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991) found that students' efficacy beliefs were positively related to

their academic attainment and their persistence in academic endeavors" (p. 468). Efficacy is the judgment one has about having the capabilities to follow a plan to achieve a particular goal (Goddard, et al., 2004).

Following this finding further, Pajares (1996) points out "efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situations" (p. 544). In this situation, "the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience" (Pajares, 1996, p. 544). Clearly, then, people who have low self-efficacy may find certain tasks "tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem" (Pajares, 1996, pp. 544-545). Self-efficacy deals with the beliefs students have about themselves as well as the beliefs teachers have about themselves (Hoy, et al., 2006). Yet, having high self-efficacy "helps to create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities" (Pajares, 1996, p. 545).

Besides that, when students have a sense their teachers believe they are capable of achieving particular tasks, the students tend to live up to those encouraging expectations (Ryan & Patrick, 2001). One of the sociocognitive factors that works with self-efficacy beliefs is "outcome expectations or goals" (Pajares, 1997, Encouraging Intertheoretical Crosstalk and Collaboration section, para. 3). Students who believe they have the ability to achieve do not always perform based on their beliefs about themselves just as students who may not believe they can achieve particular feats may indeed achieve their goals because their "low self-efficacy may be overcome by valued and desired outcomes,

potential awards, or competing self-beliefs" (Pajares, 1997, Encouraging Intertheoretical Crosstalk and Collaboration section, para. 2).

Thompson and Webber (2010) assert STARS is a proactive approach which fosters a healthy self-efficacy for students. STARS, a component in a SWPBS, is the student and teacher agreement realignment strategy (STARS). Because the STARS method has a component which calls for students to do self-assessments, the students are, in essence, internally working on their behavior. With the STARS approach, students are exercising ownership for their behavior. Thompson and Webber (2010) reveal the STARS approach eliminates the aspect of students behaving in a positive manner because they expect to receive a particular award or some form of recognition. The self-management approach has the students develop the necessary cognitive skills that will enable them to be successful in the classroom.

Thompson and Webber (2010) further contend the findings from a STARS study correlate with studies aimed at assessing the effectiveness of interventions geared toward enhancing students' efficacies. In addition to that, Walker, Cheney, Stage, and Blum (2005) contend the efficacy of students can be gauged by examining student referrals. By taking a closer look at student referrals, school leaders have the opportunity to identify as well as address the needs of their students.

Motivation Theory

When students reach the high school level, most of their motivation is channeled byway of tangible rewards (Otis, Gouzet, & Pelletier, 2005). Otis et al. (2005) go on to indicate students may complete tasks or behave in a particular manner only because of the reward they may receive and not because they should strive for success and behave

appropriately since that is the correct thing to do. On a different note, Halawah (2006) suggests in order to achieve long-term change, schools should have a plan to adjust the culture of the school as opposed to offering students extrinsic motivational items. If schools can maintain a conducive learning and behavioral environment, then student outcomes such as dropout rates, academic achievements, and school attendance will be positively influenced.

The Positive Behavioral Support Program and Jostens Renaissance Program are two nationally-acclaimed curriculums (Caught in the Act, 2004). The Renaissance Program is a schoolwide positive behavior support system aimed at improving student behavior, attendance, and grades (*Jostens Renaissance*, 2003). Each school has the option to form aspects of Josten's Renaissance Program to fit the needs of its students. The Renaissance Program does give students rewards with the hope of creating a positive school setting (*Jostens Renaissance*, 2003). Renaissance involves various stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents, and community members. All stakeholders are expected to work together to establish positive learning environments (*Jostens Renaissance*, 2003). *Jostens Renaissance* (2003) suggests school leaders revitalize the educational setting to make it inviting for students and teachers. School leaders should involve parents and businesses to foster effective school-community relations and ultimately teach students how it is acceptable to have a genuine interest to excel in school (*Jostens Renaissance*, 2003).

B. F. Skinner's operant conditioning is extremely similar to the extrinsic reward system offered through the Renaissance Program and other PBS programs that use rewards to motivate students. Skinner held the philosophy of rewarding positive

behavior with reinforcement that is also positive while enforcing negative reinforcement when misbehavior occurs (Zirpoli, 2005). Bohanon, Fenning, Carney, and Minnis-Kim (2006) further point out how teachers are spending the majority of their time addressing students' negative behavior; teachers should be focusing on emphasizing students' positive accomplishments. Skinner's operant conditioning has become the foundation for several positive behavior systems (Lieberman, 2000). A token economy follows an operant conditioning philosophy. According to Zlomke and Zlomke (2003) a token economy involves issuing tokens that can later be traded in for prizes. If, however, negative outcomes occur, any tokens that have been issued are then taken back (Zlomke & Zlomke, 2003).

Stone (2004) notes the *Nation at Risk* "identified student effort as the inescapable essential for school improvement" (p. 2). Educational leaders have held on to the notion that teachers should be making their curriculum "exciting, engaging, and fun" in an effort to fully engage students in the learning process (Stone, 2004, p. 2). Somers et al. (2009) assert schools should aim to completely involve students in their learning process and really understand how what they are being taught has an impact on their future lives. Teachers can begin to better involve students in their instructional strategies by designing lesson plans that cater to the specific learning needs and styles of their students (Somers, et al., 2009). Furthermore, according to Stone (2004), teachers have been informed "if their teaching is truly enthusiastic, innovative, and creative, students will learn spontaneously, if not effortlessly" (p. 2).

Principals can be of assistance by taking on the responsibility that such elements are taking place: providing the teachers with the resource materials and people they need

especially for their academically-struggling students, keeping the sizes of the classes at a manageable number, placing teachers who meet the qualifications in their qualified subject domains, canvassing support from parents to establish a good relationship between home and school, and devising a mentor system that will enable each student to have at least one trusting relationship with a school official (Somers, et al., 2009).

In addition to that, principals should spread the responsibilities of instructional leadership; doing so will enhance the manner in which the school is managed and thereby increase student achievement (Hallinger, 2003). Principals who exercise a transformational leadership role view the involvement of educators and parents as vital in the school setting. Jackson (2000) further indicates when evaluations were conducted on schools which had students who were performing well, it was evidenced teachers were a part of the instructional leadership. Leithwood (2000) points out much attention is now on transformational leadership which calls for administrators to mimic the positive behavior they want from their students; eventually, students will perform in the very same manner.

Instructional leadership coupled with transformational leadership creates the concept of shared instructional leadership (Ylimaki, 2007). Hallinger's (2003) theory of shared instructional leadership has been qualified in literature as well as in studies (Jackson, 2000; Lambert, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003). Hallinger's (2003) shared instructional leadership theory stresses the following traits:

1. a climate of high expectations, innovation and educational improvement;
2. a shared sense of purpose in the school;

3. a reward structure that reflects the school's mission as well as goals set for staff and students;
4. a range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and the continuous development of staff; and
5. pedagogical knowledge and skills. (Ylimaki, 2007, p. 12)

Shared instructional leadership becomes transformational "when teachers perceive principals' instructional leadership behaviors to be appropriate, they grow in commitment, professional development, and willingness to innovate" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 5).

Laurence Steinberg, the author of *Beyond the Classroom, Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do* asserts in his book the idea "high-achieving students treat their studies as work, not fun and games" (Stone, 2004, p. 2). Students who succeed in their school work do so because they view the work as important and strive to do their best (Stone, 2004). Without changing the study habits of students, the achievement of students will not improve even if the standards have been raised, the level of expectation is higher, and the motivating of students to do better is at a high level (Stone, 2004). Stone (2004) points out what education leaders suggest "learning takes study and study takes time and effort" (p. 2). The entire premise surrounding education can be thrown off when one follows "the idea that learning should be motivated solely by interest and enthusiasm" (Stone, 2004, p. 2). Students may never develop desires to achieve academically or behave appropriately without the possibility of receiving a reward for their positive outcomes (Bohanon, et al., 2006). Motivations with reward components do not help to mold students to become overall, well-rounded adults; the

effects of reward motivation are only short-lived (Kohn, 1999). If students never have an inner-desire to do what is right, without reward motivation, they may never learn to complete tasks or behave appropriately (Bohanon, et al., 2006).

Stone (2004) further notes students should study and learn because they want to achieve and not because they believe "learning occurs only when studies are exciting and fun. In truth, many valuable lessons in both school and daily life are not fun at all" (p. 2). Parents, teachers, and other stakeholders should be adamant that students study and learn regardless if they want to or not so that they will have a better opportunity to achieve in school (Stone, 2004). When students put forth the effort when a lesson is easy or challenging, "they learn that real achievement usually requires a real effort" (Stone, 2004, p. 2). Those students who were meeting their educational goals and behaving properly viewed the positive behavior support as extra and not necessarily as an incentive (*Jostens Renaissance*, 2003). "Making an effort to study and learn should be treated as a matter of civic responsibility" (Stone, 2004, p. 7). Along those same lines, if stakeholders would teach children their work ethic should preempt their pleasurable moments, this type of behavior would teach students to be mature and have self-discipline (Stone, 2004).

Bjornebekk (2008) notes "it appears that it may be pointless for an individual to possess the ability to create an adequate plan of action unless he or she possesses the motivation to execute the plan" (p. 160). Bjornebekk (2008) further indicates: Temperaments are linked to motivation via the individual's likes and dislikes and chosen courses of action. Introverts do not like, and tend to avoid, high levels of stimulation. Individuals with a strong behavioral inhibition system are inhibited by their sensitivity to

punishment and non-reward. Extroverts and individuals with a strong behavioral activation system like, and tend to seek out, exciting situations. (p. 162)

The differences that individuals have can explain how their desire to achieve goals differs although their motivational techniques are the same. When analyzing the manner in which students learn, each student's temperament and goals should be considered (Bjornebekk, 2008). Bjornebekk (2008) contends:

> Individuals are characterised by distinct temperamental sensitivity and life experience. Therefore, a given stimulus may have a very different effect on separate individuals and may have a similar or disparate effect on the activation of positive affect and negative affect. Affect is a key and defining feature of temperament. (pp. 155-156)

By examining "the integration of temperaments and motives/goals," the educational impact will be positive for students (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 153). Clearly, then "emotional processes directly and indirectly influence achievement goals through individual variation in temperamental sensitivity and individual style of affect regulation" (Bjornebekk, 2008, p. 154).

Response to Intervention

Leaders in the educational setting should evaluate the different RTI models when they are in the process of "planning, selecting, and implementing an RTI model that best fits their contexts" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 2). Mellard et al. (2011) further denote students who receive "a motivational reward" benefit from a RTI model that has "a motivation-focused intervention" (p. 9). The greatest difference of the RTI models

appears to be when an intervention should be implemented and at what point students should progress through the different tier levels.

For example, Mellard et al. (2011) suggest "all students participate in a core social behavior curriculum if school-wide data indicate more than 20% to 30% of students are demonstrating problems" (p. 9). Also, if a student reaches a certain "number of major behavioral rule violations under the existing practices," that student should be placed in a Tier II category which would allow for an intervention at the classroom level (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 9). "Tertiary supports provide students who are displaying chronic behavior problems with not just primary and secondary interventions, but also more individualized strategies to address the behaviors" (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 62).

Pursuing that further, Anderson-Ketchmark and Alvarez (2010) state "secondary interventions are intended to provide support for students who are at risk for more serious problem behavior and need supports in addition to those provided in the universal or primary prevention tier" (p. 62). Mellard et al. (2011) reveal some RTI models consider "course grades, rates of improvement toward a specific goal, discipline referrals, attendance, suspension, and behavior incident reports" (p. 9). Each RTI model has an assessment "to determine students' growth or improvement over time, which then informs instruction or intervention decisions" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 8). "A well-developed RTI model is intended to prevent academic and behavioral difficulties and the need for extensive intervention" (Mellard, et al., 2011, p. 2).

Positive Behavior Intervention Support

Walker et al. (2005a) suggest PBS is a relatively new concept that public school leaders are using to assist students with their behavioral, academic, and social/emotional achievements and successes. Each school should have three different levels for their intervention strategies. The initial level involves every student at the school receiving intervention techniques that will positively impact their overall school development. Walker et al. (2005a) reports studies indicate "approximately 80% of students will need no further interventions or supports when systems at this level are positive, consistent, and well established" (p. 194). The middle intervention level involves more personalized or student-specific intervention strategies for those students who are in jeopardy of not exhibiting the necessary outcomes and behaviors to be successful in school (Walker, et al., 2005a).

Lewis and Sugai (1999) suggest the small group intervention is for those students who need further accommodations than what the universal interventions provide. "Approximately 10% to 15% of a school's population have needs at this level. Targeted interventions, such as social skills groups, school counseling programs, peer tutoring, after-school homework clubs, are typically provided for these students" (Walker, et al., 2005a, p. 194). The last intervention level only accounts for five percent of the total population of the students. Students who fall in this category are oftentimes, although not exclusively, special education students (Walker, et al., 2005a). The group of students at this level requires "individualized behavior contracts, systematic functional behavioral assessment and behavior support plans, wrap-around services, and Individualized Education Programs and typical supports at this level" (Walker, et al., 2005a, p. 195).

Students' individual interventions are devised and implemented based on tests completed based on students' behavioral challenges (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Walker et al. (2005a) describe a study conducted on three schools deemed as having successfully implemented PBS in their schools. Schools are considered successfully implementing PBS if they have been effectively using the PBS intervention strategies for at least three years. The School-Wide Evaluation Tool was administered to assess the schools' implementation of PBS. If both the targeted expectations and the overall instrument score achieved at least eighty percent, then the school is considered to have successfully implemented PBS (Walker, et al., 2005a). The three elementary schools that participated in the study were located in different sections of Washington. Of the three schools, one was urban while the other two were suburban. The students who participated in the survey were primarily Caucasian and male. Even if the parents did not offer their consent for their children to participate in the study, the school still offered necessary supportive measures that the students needed (Walker, et al., 2005a).

Walker et al. (2005a) report stage one and two of the three stages of Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD) were completed October 2002. Stage one calls for the teachers to recommend students who the teachers believe may be susceptible to developing behavioral concerns. The second stage involves teachers completing a Critical Events Inventory and a behavior checklist which assesses students' adaptive and maladaptive conducts; this inventory is completed on every student the teachers nominate. The Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) consists of 50 statements that measure students' social, behavioral, and academic attitudes and abilities. Walker, et al. (2005a) points out only teachers completed the SSRS during the spring term of 2003.

The final stage which requires observations in the classroom as well as on the playground was not initiated because the study only had a focal point on timely identifying students which could only be based on the first two SSBD stages (Walker, et al., 2005a).

Students' referrals were monitored using the Schoolwide Information System (SWIS). Walker et al. (2005a) suggest the referral information from SWIS allows the school leaders to make data-driven decisions regarding students' behavioral issues; additionally, by analyzing the discipline reports, school leaders can implement interventions that are not only applicable for the entire school but also individualized based on the direct needs of individual students. Checking the office referrals two times a month and establishing individual and schoolwide interventions based on the data from the referrals is one method of assessing a schoolwide positive behavior support (SWPBS) system (Walker et al., 2005a). Colvin and Fernandez (2000) report PBS systems that are implemented on a schoolwide basis have positively influenced students' behavior; the impact is evidenced by the drop in the number of discipline referrals to the office.

SWPBS is a methodology schools are implementing in an effort to create positive learning and social atmospheres at their schools. Although SWPBS has its beginnings in the realm of special education services and interventions, now SWPBS is geared toward every student in a schoolwide, comprehensive approach (Thompsom & Webber, 2010). Walker et al. (2005a) continue to report an experiment involving an outside assessor who conducts a School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) which involves twenty-eight assessment items; the assessor also canvasses the school and speaks informally to teachers, students, and other staff members. The assessor also examines written information concerning PBS.

The results of the study indicate despite the implementation of PBS for at least three years, there still are a great number of students who exhibit problematic behavioral issues. Because of this information, Walker et al. (2005a) suggest schools perform once-a-year evaluations of their PBS systems. Students' needs change and schools should be proactive with putting the necessary interventions in place. Furthermore, the analysis of PBS systems should never be completed with the idea that nothing will need to be altered; school leaders should actively seek out the ever-changing needs of their students (Walker, et al., 2005a).

Walker, Golly, McLane, and Kimmich (2005b) indicate Oregon's 1999 legislative team provided $450,000 to any school and/or its district which expressed a desire to participate in the First Step Program. The First Step Program is an intervention method which began in Oregon that had a focus on students in kindergarten to the second grade level who displayed potentially at-risk behaviors. Oregon legislators hired the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) to evaluate the First Step Program (Walker, et al., 2005b).

According to Walker et al. (2005b) HSRI found those who were involved in the First Step Program were positively impacted by the program's aims and intentions. HSRI also pointed out how schools and districts had various levels of execution of the First Step Program which has much to do with the impact the program has on its participants. If the Fist Step Program is ineffectively instituted, then undoubtedly, the goals of the program will not be met; whereas if the program is properly executed and monitored, then those who participate in the intervention should exhibit positive outcomes (Walker, et al., 2005b). The quest for obtaining interventions that can provide facts to support

their effectiveness dates back to the middle part of the 1990s (Kauffman, 1996). Walker, et al. (2005b) asserts certain mental needs of students are not being met; furthermore, "recent research indicates that approximately 20% of school-age youth are negatively affected by behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health disorders" (p. 163).

With this information in mind, interventions that are not costly, have the ability to be altered to suit the needs of the students, and are research-proven are being sought to assist students with their deficient behaviors (Walker, et al., 2005b). There is information available to educational leaders as they are in the process of determining which intervention program or aspects of an intervention program are best for their students (Hoagwood, 2001). Written interpretations of what aspects an effective intervention program should possess exist to aid school leaders as they familiarize themselves with schoolwide interventions (Jenson, 2001).

For example, the Blueprints Model Programs was developed to concentrate on occurrences of antisocial as well as destructive behaviors (Elliott, 2001). Walker et al. (2005b) point out the importance of analyzing the particular factors associated with the interventions. In fact, the U. S. surgeon general circulated two documents that detailed data-based interventions which had proven them to effectively aid with diminishing the abnormal behavior of destructive students and mentally-disturbed youth (Walker, et al., 2005b).

Moreover, other groups have formulated lists of effective interventions; these groups include the following: the U. S. Department of Safe and Drug Free Schools, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the U. S. Office of Special Education Programs, the National Hamilton-Fish Institute on School and Community

Violence, and the Center for Children's Mental Health at Columbia University (Walker, et al., 2005b). Graham (2005) goes on to reveal *Exceptional Children* has a current edition that caters to data-driven information regarding special education.

In addition to that, there are preeminent groups of researchers such as Greenberg, Domitrovich, and Bumbarger (1999) and Leff, Power, Manz, Costigan, and Nabors (2001) who have conducted research on and have made known to the public analytical reviews of various interventions (Walker, et al., 2005b). Their research describes some of the challenges that students face; their research also summarizes different types of effectively-proven interventions. Some of the interventions are designed to be shared with the entire student body, other interventions are small-group specific, and the last type of interventions are individualistic in nature (Greenberg, et al., 1999). Even though the researchers point out three different types of interventions based on the students' needs, all of the types bare the same features which make the interventions beneficial to the students (Greenberg, et al., 1999).

Walker, et al. (2005b) report the similar attributes of successful interventions include the following criteria:

1. tended to involve multiple agents within the intervention (caregivers, teachers, and peers),
2. spanned more than 1 school year so the intervention could have a chance to fully register its effects,
3. had multiple components (teacher training, child social and/or academic skills instruction, parent management training), and

4. were implemented across multiple settings (classroom, playground, home). (p. 164)

Walker et al. (2005b) asserts the before mentioned researchers who compiled the commentary on the successful interventions highly recommend that the intervention programs that are being used be scrutinized for their effectiveness because the researchers' findings reveal analysis of the interventions is a stage that is oftentimes neglected or poorly executed.

Sugai and Horner (2001) pinpoint particular characteristics that positive interventions should have for successful outcomes. Those characteristics

1. specifically define appropriate behavior that is expected in school settings (behavior expectations),
2. teach children these behavior expectations in all school settings (classroom and non-classroom settings),
3. support appropriate behavior through prompting and providing specific feedback in various ways when it occurs, and
4. use data to further guide decisions regarding supportive interventions (Sugai & Homer, 2001, p. 281).

There is training based on social cognitive learning for educators to receive; this framework-based training will assist teachers as they are instructing students on how to self-correct and adjust their misbehavior (Thompson & Webber, 2010). School stakeholders who work at a school that want to use PBIS are trained within a schoolwide SWPBS setting. School social workers are especially encouraged to participate in the SWPBS training since SWPBS "provides the foundation for secondary and tertiary

interventions" and school social workers primarily deal with those two areas (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 61).

School social workers already have the necessary skills to assist with establishing PBIS in a school setting. Some of the necessary skills include "data collection, analysis, and interpretation; selection of evidence-based interventions; consultation; assessments, observation, and documentation; and community resource brokering" (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 62). Thompson and Webber (2010) point out SWPBS training is available for both teachers and social workers so they are able to devise appropriate individualistic intervention strategies. Along those same lines, in order for PBIS to be a success in the school, "the entire staff must receive PBIS training, and 80 percent of personnel must agree to uphold the intent of the philosophy" (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 63).

Schools that wish to become a PBIS school also should consult the PBIS Website at http://www.pbs.org for research and resource information. By investigating the information that is located on the PBIS Website, educational leaders will have the opportunity "to fully understand the investment that is needed and the resulting positive effect that PBIS can have on school climate, school culture, and academic learning" (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 63).

Dropout Prevention

The United States has a serious dropout issue "with an estimated 1 in 8 children never graduating from high school" (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004, p. 36). Students who tend to be victims of dropping out of school tend to be students who have a learning, emotional, or behavioral disability. Christenson and Thurlow (2004) further reveal

"dropout rates are disproportionately high for students from Hispanic, African American, Native American, and low-income backgrounds; students who live in single-parent homes; and those who attend large urban school" (p. 36). The evaluation of dropout prevention programs does not indicate exactly which type of students will drop out of school; therefore, schools should focus on using a dropout prevention program or philosophy which will benefit all students, regardless of their at-risk factors (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

With NCLB (2002) labeling schools based on the performance levels of their students on standardized test scores, schools are constantly aiming to increase student achievement (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Interventions should be in place during the initial stages of students' education. Students do not make the decision to drop out of school in a moment's notice. The decision to drop out is usually made in elementary school (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Students who exhibit behavioral problems at an early age tend to continue with the same disruptive behaviors as they get older (Campbell, 2002).

Stormont, Smith, and Lewis (2007) signify the critical need of instituting positive behavioral support before students enter the fourth grade in order to deter students from developing negative behavioral attributes that they may continue to exhibit throughout the rest of their lives. Lampi, Fenty, and Beaunae (2005) describe how teachers should instruct students how to behave in an acceptable manner before misbehavior takes place. By teaching students about positive behavior expectations and demonstrating such intended behavior, the students are being property trained on how to exhibit positive

behavior. DePry and Sugai (2002) suggest when teachers set the behavioral expectations early on in the classroom setting, the students will benefit in a positive manner.

Lewis, Colvin, and Sugai (2000) go on to point out students will benefit if teachers enforce the same classroom expectations while students are even eating in the cafeteria. The same encouraging behavioral expectations also can be achieved if the standards are carried over while they play at recess (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998). Finally, Colvin, Sugai, Good, and Lee (1997) indicate teaching and modeling appropriate behavior before discipline issues occur helps to reinforce positive behavior as students move from one school activity or location to the next.

The reasons students drop out vary based on the individual student (Christenson & Thurlow 2004). Christenson and Thurlow (2004) indicate some usual reasons students drop out include their having an extended amount of time of feeling isolated and uninvolved with the happenings at their school. Additionally, students tend to stop attending school altogether due to academic struggles and behavioral challenges. Students with such difficulties feel out of place at school; as a result, they do not develop a positive outlook for school. In an effort to deter students from dropping out of school, all stakeholders such as the students, their families, their educational setting, and their community members all have a particular role to play. Christenson and Thurlow (2004) suggest "family factors associated with reduced dropout rates include parental support, monitoring and supervision, high regard for education, and positive expectations regarding school performance" (p. 37). In order for school-completion programs to be beneficial to students, these programs must be comprised of students' families and the school's surrounding community members (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

When addressing dropout prevention, educators must recognize there are certain indicators which they cannot change. Educators cannot, for example, adjust the socioeconomic status of their students; educators have little to no impact on students' socioeconomic status. On the other hand, educators do have an influence on variables such as academic shortcomings of students and the consequences students face as a result of their misbehaving. Christenson and Thurlow (2004) report, "recently, there has been a shift toward investigating alterable variables—behaviors and attitudes that reflect students' connection to school as well as family and school practices that support children's learning—because they have greater utility for interventions" (p. 37).

Programs designed to aid students with remaining in school are sometimes called school-completion programs. These types of programs are geared towards "finding ways to enhance students' interest in and enthusiasm for school, sense of belonging at school, motivation to learn, and progress in school, as well as the value they place on school and learning" (p. 37). Successful school-completion programs focus on not only keeping students from dropping out of school, but also these programs have a focus on establishing a positive school environment for healthy student outcomes; successful school-completion programs do not simply have a aim to target and eliminate negative student behaviors. Educators and principals can evaluate whether or not the school-completion programs are beneficial to the students by taking a close look at the students' academic accomplishments, the number of graduation credits students are accumulating, how often students are suspended from school, and how engaged students are in classroom discussions (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

Chrisman (2005) calls to mind a California study which was conducted to seek information concerning why schools that were labeled low performing still were able to have students advance their test scores for two years in a row. The variables used in the study were students' test scores, the makeup of the school, and responses from interviews from the principal and teachers. What, according to Chrisman (2005), seemed to make the difference with low performing schools was the efficiency by which the school is run. The manner the principal used to lead the school, and the methods teachers applied to instruct students played a significant role in the outcomes students had on their achievement tests.

The schools that are willing to do self-assessments will see growth in their students' levels of learning. When the self-assessments identify areas which call for improvement or factors which need to be adjusted, all of the school leaders and educators must be open and willing to change (Chrisman, 2005). For example, an urban elementary school with a little more than 1,000 students was able to meet its growth standards despite particular difficulties at the school. This urban school was faced with a rate of eighty percent of its students who are learning English and ninety five percent who qualify for either free or reduced lunch (Chrisman, 2005).

In addition to that, within four years, the school has had three different principals and has lost forty percent of its instructional staff. Additionally, the class sizes were suffering from being overloaded with large numbers of students. There was also a period of time the school was operating from makeshift classrooms while classrooms were being erected (Chrisman, 2005). This urban elementary school did not allow its challenges deter it from having successful student progress. Teachers perceive the

improvement of the success of the students can be attributed to the backing from the stakeholders at the district level coupled with the adjustments made in the instructional strategies that teachers use (Chrisman, 2005).

One of the teachers interviewed in the study indicated that the teachers now have a better, positive attitude and outlook regarding the school. The teachers even commented on the additional progress they plan to achieve with their students once they are completely in their newly-constructed classroom. Besides that, the teachers at this once low-scoring urban elementary school without a doubt believe other schools can reap similar successes if they are willing to assess various elements of their schools and create means to address areas of weakness (Chrisman, 2005).

Balfanz (2011) reveals "students who struggle and fall off track during early and middle adolescence, particularly at the start of middle school (6^{th} grade) and high school (9^{th} grade), typically do not graduate, especially in high-poverty communities" (p. 54). Undoubtedly, schools have to contend with providing students with more than a quality education because students who live in areas deemed high in poverty oftentimes attend high schools that have graduation rates that are low (Balfanz, 2011). "To remain engaged in school, these students require intensive academic and social-emotional supports" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 54).

Consequently, there are some high poverty schools that are tackling their dropout problems and other educational issues by using the Diplomas Now Model. This program was tested in many schools during 2009-10, and the results of the program were very positive. Specifically, "in one Chicago high school, 92 percent of the students made it on

track to the 10th grade with their grade level cohort, compared with a district average of 64 percent" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 54). Besides that, according to Balfanz (2011)

The Diplomas Now Model has proven so successful that it was recently awarded an Investing in Innovation Validation Grant from the U. S. Department of Education that will help scale it up to 60 additional middle and high schools across 10 school districts over the next five years. (p. 54)

The Diplomas Now Model has no doubt "reduced attendance and behavior issues that put students at risk of dropping out by 50 percent;" the new program also is noted for having "reduced course failures by close to 66 percent" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 54). Balfanz (2011) further indicates "attendance, behavior, and course failure are attributes that indicate the achievement of students" (p. 55). If school leaders were to focus on those attributes, students' high school graduation rates would improve. Students who are on the path to drop out of school generally have issues with at least one of three aforementioned attributes.

To create the elements of Diplomas Now, particular concepts were utilized from the following organizations: the Talent Development secondary program at Johns Hopkins University; City Year, a nonprofit AmeriCorps organization; and Communities in Schools, a community-based dropout prevention organization. The four elements that embody Diplomas Now include the following characteristics: Effective Whole-School Reform, An Early-Warning System, Strategic Deployment of Near Peers, and Team-based work. Under the concept of Effective Whole-School Reform, Balfanz (2011) points out

> Strategies include creating a more personalized learning environment for students and teachers by enabling teams of teachers to work with a common set of 75-90 students for one or more years, implementing challenging research-based instructional programs in core subjects, providing extensive professional development supports for teachers and administrators, offering coordinated extra-help courses for students, and fostering strong school-family partnerships. (p. 55)

With the element of An Early-Warning System, teachers are aware when students begin to display the signs of becoming a potential drop out. Instead of ignoring the early indications, "this system is linked to a tiered response system that combines proven prevention and intervention strategies and increases the intensity of supports until it solves the problem at hand" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 56).

Moreover, Balfanz (2011) specifies the students' problems will be addressed "whether it's related to attendance, behavior, effort, or course performance" (p. 56). "However, to have a positive effect, the early-warning system *must* be linked to a comprehensive prevention and intervention system across the attendance, behavior, and course performance domains" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 56).

Some examples that will aid with the prevention and intervention systems involve having "schoolwide attendance campaigns reward good and improving attendance through shout-outs and recognition at assemblies and special events" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 56). Still, teachers would be informed that they should "stress the importance of attendance at the homeroom level to foster positive peer support" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 56). Lastly, "the school reaches out to parents and community members with the same supportive message" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 56).

For the Strategic Deployment of Near Peers component, members of a national service corps group become peer helpers by coming to school when school starts for the day, and they stay throughout after school programs as well. The Near Peers come to school four out of five days. The training the Near Peers receives helps with "providing attendance monitoring, tutoring, mentoring, and homework support" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 57). In addition to that, Balfanz (2011) states, the Near Peers are able to "provide the person-power to support the whole school attendance and positive behavior support campaigns by managing weekly incentive and recognition efforts" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 57).

In final consideration, the Team-based work aspect emphasizes all of the stakeholders should share the same purpose or mission and school leaders must provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate with each other; when teachers collaborate with each other, they should meet with both teachers of the same discipline and grade level (Balfanz, 2011). Also, school leaders should assign teachers tasks and teaching assignments that are doable; plus, teachers who teach core subjects should continue to have the same students for at least a year's time (Balfanz, 2011).

Another important element of Diplomas Now is "teachers use clear, data-based decision-making rules to determine when a student needs to move from one level of support to another" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 57). In final analysis, Balfanz (2011) reveals schools have the capability of having their teachers to be trained by members of Talent Development. Similarly, leaders of Communities in Schools, the City Year program, and the Talent Development are available "to ensure deep integration of the new design into the day-to-day workings of the school" (Balfanz, 2011, p. 58). Christenson and Thurlow

(2004) indicate school-completion programs should be developed over time; it takes time for an effective program to be fully implemented, and the efforts of the intervention strategies should be individualist for the best results for the students. The National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University has a plethora of documentation regarding dropout issues and what various schools are doing to combat the dropout challenges at their schools.

The repertoire of the various school-completion programs, strategies, and interventions only provide a certain amount of information to treat the dropout problems (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Christenson and Thurlow (2004) suggest these programs need an extensive evaluation to determine if these dropout prevention programs are truly getting students to attend school on a regular basis and not dropping out of school. With such strict federal guidelines, it is imperative the dropout prevention decisions educational leaders make are supported experimentally and researched heavily (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

Perception

One of the components in a SWPBS is the student and teacher agreement realignment strategy (STARS). This particular component is designed to change the perceptions that all the school stakeholders hold regarding how things are usually done within the classrooms as well as throughout the entire school (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Thompson and Webber (2010) reveal the STARS is geared towards lowering the number of student discipline referrals while at the same time creating better usage of the time allotted for teachers to teach; STARS has a goal to create positive relationships between students and teachers, also.

The STARS method tries to teach students how to manage their behaviors themselves by teaching them particular cognitive social skills. Because STARS has an individualistic component, it will also aid students with developing a better sense of efficacy by addressing their cognitive social skills (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Thompson and Webber (2010) detail a study conducted on ten middle school age students from a Midwestern rural setting. Student selection was determined by the teachers; they selected students who most seemed to have challenges with behaving in a positive manner. Four teachers were to record their observations of the students every thirty minutes. The study lasted for an eighteen-week period focusing on the following five expected outcomes which were prominently showcased all over the school:

1. Do your work: The student's job is to learn, and in order to learn he or she must do the work assigned by his or her teacher.
2. Keep body parts to self: Students are expected to keep their body parts to themselves and to physically and verbally respect others' personal space.
3. Be considerate of others: Students are expected to respect the rights of others, including the right to learn in a safe environment.
4. Follow directions: Students are expected to follow directions from all school staff.
5. Be on time in assigned areas: Students are expected to be where they are scheduled to be. (Thompson & Webber, 2010, pp. 74-75)

According to Thompson and Webber (2010), to aid with providing students with learning how to abide by the five rules of the school, every classroom teacher incorporated an element of social skills training as a part of their regular lesson plan. The

social skills training activities occurred twice a week. The students who were participating in the study maintained a record of how well they believe they followed the targeted rules; the teachers gauged the behavior of the students as well. The format to gauge the behavior was a simple yes or no response (Thompson & Webber, 2010). As a part of the analysis of the students' and teachers' perceptions, the social worker at the school met with students and teachers once a week to interpret their markings and assess how both the students and the teacher view how the students have followed the five expected rules or outcomes (Thompson & Webber, 2010). After the students select up to two behavioral goals for the pending week, the meetings with the teachers, students, and social worker was conducted in the following manner:

1. identifying positive behaviors and target behaviors, as evidenced by the data;
2. identifying measurable, and desirable behaviors related to the student's data and the school rules;
3. framing the behavior as a goal in positive language that was observable and measureable; and
4. writing the goal down as a contract, with all parties signing the contract, and taping it to the student's desk. (Thompson & Webber, 2010, p. 74)

Although not all ten students' behavior presented a significant change, the relationship between students and teachers had gotten better.

The results of the study indicate teachers had better classroom management which resulted in not as many student discipline referrals and a decrease in the number of suspensions. Thompson & Webber (2010) report the manner in which students and

teachers report their behavioral findings can be beneficial when evaluating and readjusting the intervention methods. Also, the researcher points out "future efforts should build on this study with special education students to test the efficacy of STARS in regular education settings with children struggling to maintain classroom behaviors expected by teachers" (Thompson & Webber, 2010, p. 77).

Preble & Taylor (2008) report how an entire school district worked on altering its perception. Because of the findings in a 2002 racial harassment lawsuit, all thirty schools in the Sullivan County School District in Tennessee devised an improvement plan which contained a component that measured the following areas: racial, social, and academic climate. Each of the school leaders was dedicated to the idea of evaluating the data to address any areas of need as presented by the results of the survey; moreover, they were willing to combat any negativity that was harming the attitudes and behavior of the students at their schools. The assessment, created by Main Street Academix, consisted of both qualitative and quantitative measures which inquired about the climate of the school (Preble & Taylor, 2008).

The school leaders truly believed perception was the factor behind both students' attitudes and behavior. When school leaders compare results collected from students and teachers, a wealth of information will be discovered, and it was. For example, one of the four high schools in Sullivan Count had staggering results from the school climate survey. Preble and Taylor (2008) point out the data suggested great differences between the perceptions of students when matched against the perception of teachers. Like the results of the statement "students' work is displayed publicly and celebrated by teachers" received forty seven percent from the students who either agreed or strongly agreed with

the statement; on the other hand, an overwhelming eighty two percent of teachers remarked that they agreed or strongly agreed with the aforementioned statement. Obviously, the perceptions of both the students and the teacher are varied which caused the principal to consider why there was such variation and how could he close the gap (Preble & Taylor, 2008).

Initially, when the principal was presented with the results of the climate survey, he was in extreme shock and disbelief. Then, he became more apt to really analyzing the data and trying to discover ways to better the climate at his school. One of the first steps this principal used was to involve a key group of stakeholders, student leaders. Then, the principal forged the way in the Sullivan County School District that placed a heavy focus on action research that was student-led (Preble & Taylor, 2008).

In 2003, the Sullivan County School District was able to boast it was willing to change the climate of its schools by following a model designed by Main Street Academix. The model makes the students feel they are an integral part of the school, thereby allowing the students to be in charge. All types of students whether they are considered athletes, Goths, or intellectuals, they participate in the student-led research. Students are eventually trained and given the task of interviewing other students and educators in the school.

According to Preble and Taylor (2008), when the students administer the school climate surveys to their classmates and share with them how the results of the survey will be used to interpret the perceptions of students and teachers, the students filling out the surveys will generally take great care as they respond to the survey. Although the Sullivan County School District began to focus on the climate of its schools because of

racial harassment issues, the improvement plan that was designed not only created policies and procedures that addressed harassment, but the entire district became one that was more effective because of a positive school climate (Preble & Taylor, 2008).

Preble and Taylor (2008) point out the following initiatives that were the result of focusing on a positive school environment:

1. Learning how to meet the different needs of all learners through differentiated instruction.
2. Using hands-on, manipulative-based mathematics instruction for learners who struggled with abstract concepts in mathematics.
3. Establishing positive expectations for respectful behavior in every classroom.
4. Showcasing and celebrating students' academic work in the hallways and at parent-teacher meetings.
5. Catching students being good and acknowledging positive behavior rather than focusing solely on punishing misbehavior.
6. Developing peer-tutoring and reading-buddies programs between younger and older students.
7. Initiating community-based learning and service learning programs.

Admittedly, teachers saw students working well together to combat the negative school climate. The students' state test scores were even analyzed against the climate of the school in 2006. The schools that were implementing practices which focused on positive school climate saw an increase in their students' academic success (Preble & Taylor, 2008). In light of this information, all of the schools in the Sullivan County

School District in the 2007-2008 school year were establishing methods to continue to grow academically and retain a positive school climate. Preble and Taylor (2008) note students are able to succeed academically when the climate of the school is safe both physically and emotionally.

There is also evidence of another study conducted to assess the perceptions of ninth grade students who were identified as at risk for dropping out of school. The ninth graders' perceptions were centered on what motivated them regarding school and who the inspirational people are in their lives. The ninth graders were a part of a large, urban Midwest public school district which only boasted an approximate fifty percent graduation rate. According to Somers et al. (2009) the ninth graders were having a hard time changing over from a middle school environment to a high school one. These students were having difficulties with low self-esteem, non-participation in school activities, and low grade point averages. The requirements and pressures at high school are greater than those at the middle school level. Students new to the high school were facing additional worries in such areas as academic and social (Somers, et al., 2009).

As a part of the experiment to assist the students, the school placed a heavy focus on establishing a mentor relationship between each student and adult at the school. The school studied research which indicated positive mentor relationships produced effective results with keeping students in school; therefore, the school established the following targets: "to evaluate whether this approach to intervention with these urban, at-risk teens was effective in changing educational attitudes and behaviors, as well as school grades, and to examine these teens' career goals and role models" (Somers, et al., 2009, p. 350).

One-hundred forty ninth graders participated in the study on a voluntary basis. Those who volunteered were involved in various tutoring and mentoring strategies. The group was nearly one hundred percent African-American students who came from mostly a most low socioeconomic income (Somers, et al., 2009). The instrumentation for the students posed questions to gather information about their academic achievement, educational attitudes and behaviors, and career goals and role models. The students' academic achievement was determined by calculating their grade point averages (GPA) on a four point scale; their GPA was measured at the close of eighth grade and each nine-week grading period during their freshman year of high school.

Using a Likert scale, students completed a survey with nine questions about their educational attitudes and behaviors; the categories consisted of the students' educational intentions, educational commitment behavior, identification of the financial value of education, and identification of the personal value of education. The students were asked to gauge their perceptions on statements about whether they actually anticipated graduating from high school, why they are persistently absent from school, what type of value they place on finishing high school, and how they may feel about themselves if they actually complete their high school education (Somers, et al., 2009). The section on career goals and role models was set up in an open response format for the students to write their beliefs about what career path they would like to follow and whom they deem as role models. There were only two questions on this portion of the survey with one asking "at this point in your life, what kind of job do you see yourself having after high school," and the other inquiring "who do you most look up to" (Somers, et al., 2009, p. 351).

After all necessary assent and consent forms were received and training sessions for the tutors were completed, the study commenced. The tutoring sessions were held four days a week after school from 3:15 until 5:15. In addition to the academic assistance, students were also provided interventions "that were designed to enhance self efficacy, self esteem, knowledge of career options and motivation" (Somers, et al., 2009, p. 351.

Although the GPAs for the students who participated in the tutoring intervention were somewhat higher at each grading period than those who did not participate, the results of the experimental group's GPAs did not present levels of significance. Somers et al. (2009) indicate maybe GPA was not a good indicator; the researcher probably should have used standardized test scores as a better measurement of student achievement. To measure the effectiveness of the tutoring intervention students were presented a post program survey based on student perception at the close of their ninth grade year (Somers, et al., 2009).

The responses to the educational attitudes and behaviors questions reveal "they did wish to finish their education, practice good school behavior, and identified both the personal and financial value of continuing with their education" (Somers, et al., 2009, p. 353). The open ended questions about students' career goals and role models presented interesting results. Before the tutoring program, students had an interest in career fields that were political and media-related; whereas after the tutoring program, their interests were in entertainment and educational fields. Somers et al. (2009) indicate the initial educational attitudes and behavior ratings were already high; therefore, it was hard to account for further growth after the tutoring sessions.

It was evidenced by the researcher's observations that a healthy relationship between the students and their mentors was created. Students could, though, benefit from receiving information on how to achieve their career goals. It is critically important for high school freshman to gain information relative to what is needed to achieve their intended career goals. Both tests before and after the tutoring experiment revealed parents as the students' primary role models (Somers, et al., 2009). With this in mind, school systems should develop methods and procedures that allow parents to have a direct role within the school setting in order to positively impact students' completing high school.

Ultimately, the experiment did have a positive impact on students with helping them to maintain good GPAs and assisting them with adjusting in their new high school setting. Furthermore, the same factors which were considered for this urban high school should also be a focus as educational leaders work to find what motivates students to remain in school. Knowing what motivates students to remain in school would drive the intervention strategies that schools adopt and use (Somers, et al., 2009).

Oregon has thirty six school counties, and eleven of them participated in a statewide intervention strategy named First Step to Success. This First Step program is, in fact, "a research-based, early intervention program" (Walker, et al., 2005b, p. 164). The evaluation of Oregon's First Step program contained a teacher perception component which contained both narrative and numerical-type data questions (Walker, et al., 2005b). The survey was constructed to gauge such concerns as the teachers' expectations of the program prior to its implementation and whether they believe the program was a benefit to the students. The results of the perception surveys reveal the teachers who participated

with First Step found it to be advantageous to both the entire school setting as well as positively impactful in their classrooms (Walker, et al., 2005b).

Another important analysis of the First Step program is to point out parents were provided a short Likert-formulated survey to assess how parents felt their children were benefitting from the First Step program. Parents were also given an opportunity to share their greatest likes and dislikes about First Step. The parents' perceptions indicated they recognized favorable behaviors and attitudes at home (Walker, et al., 2005b).

Although the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the First Step program revealed complimentary remarks and ratings, their surveys revealed results which were not significant in a statistical manner (Walker, et al., 2005b). Walker et al. (2005b) assert researchers who advocate analysis of intervention programs "called for greater emphasis on careful assessments of the implementation process to ensure acceptable levels of treatment fidelity" (p. 164). "Implementation fidelity has been defined as the degree to which intervention is delivered as intended and what an intervention program actually consists of in practice" (Walker, et al., 2005b, p. 166).

With the results of the teachers' perception survey, the First Step program was adjusted to address the concerns of the teachers. The teachers suggested the following as areas needed for improvement: having multiple children in the classroom who have behavioral needs is difficult to manage, having large class sizes makes it challenging to focus on the students who need the strategic support, finding the time to incorporate the intervention strategies while meeting curriculum standards, lacking the amount of teacher training, and finding it hard to withhold the rewards students are unable to receive if the students do not meet their targeted behavioral goal (Walker, et al., 2005b). Finally, it is

once again important to point out "a very positive outcome of this study was that both parents and teachers saw collateral positive effects in the classroom setting and in the family context" (Walker, et al., 2005b).

Summary

Because positive behavior intervention has been found to positively impact the lives of children, such strategies should be instituted at the onset of students' educational careers (Stormont, et al., 2006). PBS has literature which backs up its methodology of "positive reinforcement, prompts, and cues, direct instruction, and data-based decision making" (Stormont, et al., 2006).

There are several behavioral strategies that are designed for the consequences students face after they have misbehaved; more emphasis should be placed on addressing discipline issues before they arise. Educators should embrace a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive one (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Punishing students after the undesirable behavior has occurred does not essentially teach students how they should behave, nor does punishing them motivate them to conduct themselves in a more positive manner (Thompson & Webber, 2010). Instead of focusing on reprimanding students after they misbehave, teachers need to realign their reinforcement so that the reinforcement reflects a positive tone that recognizes students for their good behavior (Maag, 2001).

There are some factors that school leaders cannot alter such as where a student lives, but the school staff can certainly help to get students to see the value of an education (Somers, et al., 2009). Just as there is no one specific reason or factor behind why students drop out of school, there is no one particular way to counteract students

dropping out of school. In light of this information, interventions must be established that are student-specific and effective (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). There are, though, some commonalities that the intervention strategies should contain such as getting the students motivated about school; emphasizing the importance of making sure students' parents are majorly involved in their children's education; and evaluating on a regular basis the interventions used at the school to determine their effectiveness or lack of effectiveness (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

Even though President Obama recently has made changes to NCLB (2002), this policy continues to impact schools and their districts (Dillon, 2011). School districts and individual schools still should pull in parents and community members to aid with getting students to school daily, keeping them engaged in schoolwork, feeling a true member of the school community, and finally graduating from high school (Somers, et al., 2009). Somers et al. (2009) suggest school systems involve parents in the educational development of their children. Because most students view their parents as their role models, having parents play a positive, active role in their children's quest to complete high school is a vital element. Educators are now finding that they must attend to the social needs of their students in addition to catering to their academic and behavioral needs (Somers, et al., 2009). Along those same lines, educators must recognize there are particular variables such as the socioeconomic make up of students that cannot be altered by the teachers.

More research is needed to evaluate the programs that schools are using to aid with their dropout prevention strategies (Somers, et al., 2009). Somers et al. (2009) point out ninth grade is a critical time in the educational advancement for students because they

are entering a new level of their educational lives. The transition from middle school to high school is often regarded as a difficult adjustment for students because they are now encountering new academic and social issues. Also, students who are perceived as at-risk endure even more difficulties because they are faced with additional factors such as coming from low socioeconomic families and living in poor neighborhoods (Somers, et al., 2009).

Thompson and Webber (2010) point out STARS is an intervention which schools can implement to assist with students who misbehave. Despite the fact the STARS study was conducted using special education students, it has the capability to have beneficial outcomes across the board including students who receive a general education. The STARS method has data which proves it assists teachers with keeping students behaving in a positive manner and allows teachers to be able to maintain good classroom management (Thompson & Webber, 2010).

NCLB (2002) has placed such explicit educational expectations and accountability on schools, and some students need support to meet not just their educational goals, but they also need assistance adjusting socially in their school environments (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Because President Obama has not wholly eliminated NCLB (2002), school districts and their states are still faced with holding their teachers and principals accountable for the academic growth of their students (Dillon, 2011). Therefore, schools should continually seek means to improve teaching strategies, make students feel welcome at school, provide students with a sense of the ability to achieve academically, and implement dropout prevention systems. Schools should at

least annually assess or evaluate the systems they have in place to monitor and adjust their measures to match the needs of the students (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following information represents a breakdown of the methodology that was used for this study. All of the research questions and hypotheses are presented in this section as well. For every research question, there was a coordinating hypothesis. The research design that was used for the study is identified, and the participants that were involved in the study are described. The instrumentation that was used in the study is explained; detailed descriptions of the survey questions are outlined along with the procedures that were followed in order to conduct the survey. Both the dependent and independent variables used on the instrument are explained also. The method that was used to analyze the data is outlined, ending with a brief summary. Finally, the documents discussed in this section are also attached in the Appendixes.

Research Design

Correlational research was the statistical treatment for this study's research design. A survey was used to collect the information, and the surveys were administered to teachers in public schools from kindergarten through the 12th grade (see Appendix A). The variables on the survey were the perception of PBIS as it related to the following components: the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. The factors were examined to determine whether or not their level of impact was significant or not. Appropriate tables were created to show the results from the survey in both graph and narrative formations.

Participants

The participants in the study were a random sample of public school teachers throughout the state of Mississippi; the instrumentation was a teacher perception survey that was mailed out with return address envelopes. Local schools were visited during a faculty meeting in an effort to garner even more surveys. Some of the participants needed for this study did not fully complete the survey. Some of the surveys were not returned to the researcher by the designated deadline. When those limitations presented themselves, then an effort was made to obtain the necessary number of surveys needed to effectively complete the study. For example, a designated person at the school was asked to retrieve the surveys from the teachers.

Approximately three hundred surveys were distributed, and 68.3% (205) useable surveys were returned to the researcher. The majority of the surveys were mailed. Once the participants had completed the survey, they returned the survey using the self-addressed pre-stamped envelope. The surveys were returned by the requested deadline. Surveys that were issued personally at a faculty meeting were collected before teachers left the meeting. For those surveys that were given to a person of contact, that person disseminated and collected the surveys and returned them using the self-addressed pre-stamped envelope. The participants' responses were kept confidential, and all information was anonymous with no participant being identified.

Instrumentation

Before the actual survey was administered to the participants, a pilot study using only a small group of teachers was completed for the study to prove the survey's reliability and validity. A current SPSS software program was used to input all of the

data from the pilot test. A panel of experts was used to test the survey's validity. In order to assess the survey's reliability, the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient Test was utilized. Table 1 represents the reliability results for the pilot study and the dissertation. All of the reliabilities for the sections on the survey were higher than .7; therefore, the survey was reliable.

Table 1

Cronbach Alpha Results for Pilot Study and Dissertation

Variable	Pilot Study	Dissertation
Attendance	.952	.925
Major Discipline	.989	.955
Dropout Rate	.951	.906
Passing Standardized Tests	.968	.948
Overall Feelings about PBIS	.875	.804

The instrument that was used in this study was created by the researcher (go to Appendix A). The title of the instrument was Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Survey. The survey was designed to gather information regarding the perception teachers have concerning PBIS. There were three parts to the survey. The first section asked seven demographic questions while the second part assessed the teachers' perception of PBIS with twenty-four questions separated in five sections. Following were the demographic questions that were be used in Part I: gender,

age, classification of the school, years of full-time teaching experience with the school, years PBIS had been at the school, highest degree earned, and the socioeconomic status of most of the students at the school. The five sections in Part II of the survey posed questions regarding teachers' perceptions about whether PBIS affected students' daily average attendance, students' major discipline infractions (fighting, threats, etc.), students' dropout rate, percentage of students passing standardized state tests, and the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The final section of the survey asked the participants an open-ended question about what they viewed to be the most successful PBIS strategy that had been implemented at their school.

There was literature that purported PBIS was a popular intervention used in many schools as a schoolwide method of improving the school's climate and students' overall academic achievement. There was, however, a need to have additional research to discover the perceptions teachers have regarding PBIS (Mitchell, et al., 2010). Below are the actual research questions that were formulated as the basis for this study:

RQ1 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school?

RQ2 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school?

RQ3 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher?

RQ4 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school?

RQ5 On which factor (the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) does the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence?

In response to the aforementioned research questions, these were the hypotheses as indicated below:

H1 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school.

H2 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school.

H3 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher.

H4 There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school.

H5 The greatest influence is the relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school.

In Part I, the teachers' survey contained inquiries to collect demographic information; the demographic questions asked the participants to select their gender (Male or Female) and age range (20-29, 30-39, 40-49, or 50 or more). After that, the survey sought to know the grade level of each participant's school (Elementary, Middle, or High), the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher (bachelor's, master's, specialist, or doctorate), and the socioeconomic status of the students at the

school based on the percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch (0% - 25%, 26%-50%, 51%-75%, or 76%-100%).

In Part II, the instrument also posed twenty-four questions relative to teachers' perception of PBIS; fifteen of the questions had a focus on their overall or general perception of PBIS. The remaining nine questions dealt with teachers' perception of PBIS as it related to varying student outcomes. To measure the perceptions that teachers had regarding PBIS, there were five different sections on the instrument. In an effort to evaluate the perception of the teachers, the scale for the first four sections was 1 None, 2 Very Little, 3 Some, 4 Quite a Bit, or 5 A lot. The very last section had an assessment scale with a scale of 1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree, or 5 Strongly Agree.

The first PBIS teacher perception section posed three questions concerning the teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students' daily average attendance. The second PBIS teacher perception section presented four questions about teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected major discipline infractions such as fighting and threats. With four questions, the next PBIS teacher perception segment inquired about teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students' dropout rate. Yet another PBIS perception part with four questions investigated teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students' percentage passing standardized state tests. The last PBIS segment gauged teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS by presenting nine questions.

The final part of the survey allowed the participants to write their response to an open-ended question that inquired what they viewed to be the most successful PBIS strategy that had been implemented at their school.

Research question one asked whether there was a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school. To determine if there was a relationship, all twenty-four of the responses of the PBIS teacher perception questions posed in Part II of the survey were matched with question four in Part I of the survey. Question four asked teachers to select the range which represented the years of full-time teaching at the school.

Research question two inquired whether there was a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the years of experience with positive behavior intervention support at the school. To assess if there was a relationship, all twenty-four answers of the PBIS teacher perception questions posed in Part II of the survey were gauged with question five in Part I of the survey. Question five asked the teachers to provide the years PBIS had been at the school.

The third research question sought to know was there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher. To determine if there was a relationship, all answers in Part II of the survey were analyzed against question six in Part I of the survey which asked the teachers to select their highest degree earned.

The fourth research question presented the question was there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. To establish if there was a relationship or not, all Part II survey reactions and question seven from Part I were scrutinized against each other. Question seven asked teachers to select

the socioeconomic status of the students based on the percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch.

The fifth and final research question wanted to know on which factor (the number of years teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) did the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence. To see which had the greatest level of impact, all twenty-four of the responses in Part II of the survey were analyzed with the responses from Questions four, five, six, and seven in Part I of the survey. Question four asked teachers to select the range which represented the years of full-time teaching at the school. Question five asked the teachers to provide the years PBIS had been at the school. Question six asked the teachers to select their highest degree earned. Question seven asked teachers to select the socioeconomic status of the students based on the percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch.

Procedures

The researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study (check Appendix B). After IRB approved the study, the researcher mailed out and received permission letters from superintendents to be able to conduct the study at the schools in their district (refer to Appendix C). Once the superintendent granted approval, the researcher then requested and received from the principals the ability for the researcher or a designated employer of that school/district to broach the campus to deliver and retain surveys at the location and time to be determined by the

building supervisor (see Appendix D). Surveys were also mailed to schools with a participant consent letter (refer to Appendix E).

In addition to receiving the participant consent letter and the survey, the potential participants received a note of consent which was affixed to the survey explaining to the participants that their participating in the Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Survey was a strictly volunteer and confidential basis. If the teachers completed and returned the survey in the designated manner, that connoted their agreeing to participate in the study. The instrument did not request the names of the participants; therefore, the responders' remarks were anonymous and confidential. Validity and reliability testing were performed on the instrument before it was made available to the participants in the study.

Data Analysis

For this study, the dependent variable was the perception that the teachers had concerning positive behavior intervention support. The independent variables were as follows: years of full-time teaching experience with this school, years PBIS had been at this school, highest degree earned, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. The role of PBIS in the schoolwide setting and how it influenced such factors as students' daily average attendance, major discipline infractions (fighting, threats, etc.), dropout rates, and the percentage of students passing standardized state tests were documented in the literature review.

This study was primarily quantitative in nature by using qualitative methods first and then a multiple linear regression. Data was input using a current SPSS computer

software program. When conducting the multiple linear regressions, a linear relationship was checked for between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables.

Summary

For this study, there were five research questions with hypotheses for each one. The research design for this study was correlational research. To evaluate the responses from the study, a multiple regression was performed.

The title of the survey was Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Survey (refer to Appendix A). The survey was divided into three parts. Part I consisted of seven demographic questions which inquired about the participants' gender, age, the classification of their school of employment, the number of years of full-time teaching at the school, years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. Part II contained twenty-four questions which were divided into five different sections. The twenty-four questions assessed the teachers' perceptions regarding PBIS. The five sections were as follows:

1. Teachers' Perception about whether PBIS affected Students' Daily Average Attendance
2. Teachers' Perception about whether PBIS affected Major Discipline Infractions (fighting, threats, etc.)
3. Teachers' Perception about whether PBIS affected Dropout Rate
4. Teachers' Perception about whether PBIS affected Students Percentage Passing Standardized State Tests
5. Teachers' Overall/General Feelings about PBIS

The last part of the survey presented the participants with an opportunity to write their response to an open-ended question that asked what they viewed to be the most successful PBIS strategy that had been implemented at their school.

Before the survey was administered, the researcher received approval from IRB as well as from the superintendents and principals in the school districts from Mississippi that were used for the study (go to Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D). Furthermore, validity and reliability testing were conducted and achieved before the survey was administered. The participants of the survey were teachers K-12 in public schools in Mississippi that utilized some form of PBIS at their school; they participated in the study on a volunteer basis with their responses kept confidential (refer to Appendix E).

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The data for this study was collected by using a thirty-two question survey; the study was conducted in December of 2011. Various public schools in Mississippi participated in the study. The respondents were teachers who worked at elementary, middle, and high schools which utilized some form of PBIS at its school. Of the three hundred surveys that were distributed, 68.3% (205) of the teachers completely filled out and returned their surveys. Six surveys that were returned were not considered for the study as the respondents skipped the final page of the survey.

For this study, the dependent variable was the perception that the teachers had concerning PBIS. The independent variables were as follows: years of full-time teaching experience with the school, years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. Based on the collected data, the results of this study answered the following research questions:

RQ1 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school?

RQ2 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school?

RQ3 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher?

RQ4 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school?

RQ5 On which factor (the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) does the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence?

A multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data. The sections which follow reflect the descriptive, statistical, and qualitative interpretations and results of the study.

Descriptive Data

Descriptive statistics for the study are presented in the section which follows. Table 2 reflects the frequency and percent for the participants' gender, age, school level, and highest degree earned. Most of the participants of this study were female; 21.5 % (44) were male teachers while 78.5% (161) were female teachers. The age range for the respondents was distributed fairly close to each other with most teachers 26.8% (55) falling in the 50 or more age range; the fewest amount of teachers 22.9% (47) fell in the youngest age range of 20-29. Most participants 42.4% (87) taught at the high school level; the lowest group of participants 26.8% (55) came from the elementary level. Regarding the highest degree earned, the majority of the teachers 49.8% (102) had received a bachelor's degree with those with a master's degree 46.8% (96) close behind. It was not surprising that most of the teachers were female teachers. Also, it was expected that not many teachers would hold a degree beyond a master's.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	44	21.5
Female	161	78.5
Age		
20-29	47	22.9
30-39	53	25.9
40-49	50	24.4
50 or above	55	26.8
School Level		
Elementary	55	26.8
Middle	63	30.7
High	87	42.4
Highest Degree		
Bachelor's	102	49.8
Master's	96	46.8
Specialist	5	2.4
Doctorate	2	1.0

Table 3 contains the frequency and percent for the students who received free/reduced lunch. There were no schools which had 0%-25% of their students receiving free or reduced lunch. The majority of the schools participating in the study had a rate of 51%-75% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch. Based on the data, it was extremely common for the students in the schools for the study to receive free/reduced lunch.

Table 3

Free/Reduced Lunch Percentages

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Percentage of Students Who Received Free/Reduced Lunch		
0%-25%	0	0
26%-50%	59	28.8
51%-75%	83	40.5
76%-100%	19	9.3

Most of the teachers in this study had not been teaching very long; 69.3% (142) had been teaching from one up to six years. The least amount of teaching years was one while the maximum number of years teaching was thirty-one. The majority of the participants 20.5% (42) had only been teaching for one year. The mean for the years of full time teaching at the school was 6.59, and the standard deviation was 6.91.

Table 4 displays the frequency and percent for the number of years PBIS had been at the school. The years PBIS had been at the schools were between one and five years. Most schools 28.3% (58) had only been using PBIS for one year; the second highest number of years of PBIS at schools was two years with a rate of 26.8% (55). According to the data, PBIS had not been at the schools in the study for more than five years.

Table 4

Years of PBIS at the School

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Years of PBIS at the School		
1	58	28.3
2	55	26.8
3	44	21.5
4	29	14.1
5	19	9.3

Table 5 provides the mean and standard deviation for teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students' daily average attendance. The first section of Part II of the survey (Questions 1-3) asked the teachers three questions regarding teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students' daily average attendance. All three questions shared a similar mean. Question #1: How much impact has PBIS had on motivating students to attend school on a regular basis had the highest mean of 3.42. Question #3: How much impact has PBIS had on encouraging students to arrive to

school on time each day had the lowest mean of 3.15. The mean for Questions #1-3 was 3.26, and the standard deviation was .90.

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Students' Daily Average Attendance

Variable	Mean	SD
Quest #1: PBIS influences students to attend school daily.	3.42	.96
Quest #2: PBIS influences students to not check out before school ends.	3.15	.98
Quest #3: PBIS impacts students to arrive to school on time.	3.21	.97

Note. Scale: 1 = None , 5 = A lot

Table 6 gives the mean and standard deviation for teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected major discipline infractions (fighting, threats, etc.). Section two of Part II of the survey (Questions 4-7) asked the teachers four questions that evaluated teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected major discipline infractions (fighting, threats, etc.). These four questions had nearly the same mean. Question #6: What impact has PBIS had on students maintaining good behavior while at school had the highest mean of 3.55. The lowest mean was 3.45 for Question #4: How much impact has PBIS had on disruptive behavior such as fighting while at school. The mean for Questions #4-7 was 3.51, and the standard deviation was .908.

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Major Discipline Infractions (fighting, threats, etc.)

Variable	Mean	SD
Quest #4: PBIS has impacted disruptive behavior.	3.45	1.00
Quest #5: PBIS motives students to behave at school.	3.53	.97
Quest #6: PBIS impacts students' behavior.	3.55	.95
Quest #7: PBIS influences students to follow school rules.	3.51	.94

Note. Scale: 1 = None , 5 = A lot

Table 7 depicts the mean and standard deviation for teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected dropout rate. The third part of the survey (Questions 8-11) gauged teachers' perception about whether PBIS affects dropout rate. The highest mean of 3.56 was for Question #10: How much impact has PBIS had on motivating high-achieving students to remain in school? The lowest mean of 3.23 was for Question #9: What influence has PBIS had on encouraging students with low interest in school to remain in school. The average mean for Questions #8-11 was 3.95, and the standard deviation was .866.

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Dropout Rate

Variable	Mean	SD
Quest #8: PBIS influences all students to remain in school.	3.35	.95
Quest #9: PBIS influences low-interested students to remain in school.	3.23	.93
Quest #10: PBIS impacts high-achieving students to remain in school.	3.56	1.09
Quest #11: PBIS impacts average students to remain in school.	3.43	.92

Note. Scale: 1 = None , 5 = A lot

Table 8 presents the mean and standard deviation for teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students percentage passing standardized state Tests. Section four (Questions 12-15) evaluated teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students percentage passing standardized state tests. The mean scores for this section were quite similar. The highest mean was 3.37 for Question 14: How much impact has PBIS had on motivating students to believe they can be successful in their school subjects. The lowest mean of 3.25 was shared between Question 12: How much influence has PBIS had on students demonstrating an interest in their school subjects and with Question 13: How much influence has PBIS motivated students to come to school eager to learn. The mean for Questions #12-15 was 3.29, and the standard deviation was .917.

Table 8

Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Students Percentage Passing Standardized State Tests

Variable	Mean	SD
Quest #12: PBIS influences students to be interested in their school subjects.	3.25	.95
Quest #13: PBIS motivates students to come to school eager to learn.	3.25	1.00
Quest #14: PBIS impacts students believing they can be successful.	3.37	.98
Quest #15: PBIS impacts students to place a value on their education.	3.32	.99

Note. Scale: 1 = None, 5 = A lot

Table 9 reflects the mean and standard deviation for teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The fifth segment of the survey (Questions 16-24) asked teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The highest mean was 3.80 for Question #24: I have good thoughts about PBIS. The second highest mean was 3.71 for Question #22: PBIS has impacted all types of students. The lowest mean was 1.60 for Question #18: Students do not want to attend school because of PBIS. The mean for Questions #16-24 was 2.12, and the standard deviation was .629. The low mean for this section was good because the questions were asked in the negative.

Table 9

Mean and Standard Deviation for Teachers' Overall/General Feelings About PBIS

Variable	Mean	SD
Quest #16: PBIS creates a negative school environment.	1.67	.82
Quest #17: Learning is difficult because of PBIS.	1.69	.85
Quest #18: Students do not attend school because of PBIS.	1.60	.79
Quest #19: PBIS does not improve the school's environment.	1.93	1.00
Quest #20: PBIS decreases discipline problems.	3.16	1.11
Quest #21: PBIS impacts students' learning.	3.47	1.10
Quest #22: PBIS impacts all students.	3.71	.94
Quest #23: PBIS focuses on select students.	2.40	1.09
Quest #24: I have good thoughts about PBIS.	3.80	1.01

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statistical Data

When the multiple linear regression was conducted, a linear relationship was checked for between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables. The dependent variable was the perception that the teachers had concerning PBIS. The perception for the teachers was gauged by asking them questions regarding PBIS as it related to attendance, major discipline, dropout rates, passing standardized state tests, and overall/general PBIS feelings. The independent variables were the years of full-time

teaching experience with the school, years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school.

Table 10 contains the correlations for years of full-time teaching at the school. H1 suggested there would be a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school. At the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to attendance, major discipline, dropout rates, passing standardized state tests, and overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years of teaching experience at the school.

Table 10

Correlations for Years of Full-time Teaching at the School

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attendance	-.038	.585
Major Discipline	-.061	.387
Dropout Rate	-.057	.417
Passing Standardized Tests	.011	.880
Overall Feelings about PBIS	-.074	.292

Table 11 displays the correlations for years of PBIS at the school. H2 said there would be a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school. At the .05 level, there was a negative, statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to

overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years PBIS has been at the school. The questions on the instrument that gauged the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS were written in the negative. Therefore, the more years PBIS had been at the school actually indicated a positive perception of PBIS. However, at the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to attendance, major discipline, dropout rates, and passing standardized state tests when correlated with the number of years PBIS had been at the school.

Table 11

Correlations for Years of PBIS at the School

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attendance	-.054	.440
Major Discipline	.081	.250
Dropout Rate	.008	.908
Passing Standardized Tests	-.012	.869
Overall Feelings about PBIS	-.165	.018

Table 12 provides the correlations for highest degree earned. H3 suggested there would be a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher. At the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to attendance, major discipline, dropout rates, passing standardized state tests, and overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the highest degree earned by the teacher.

Table 12

Correlations for Highest Degree Earned

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attendance	-.013	.851
Major Discipline	.008	.913
Dropout Rate	-.037	.594
Passing Standardized Tests	.038	.586
Overall Feelings about PBIS	-.006	.933

Note. Scale: 1 = Bachelor's, 5 = Doctorate

Table 13 gives the correlations for the percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch. H4 suggested there would be statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. At the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to attendance, major discipline, dropout rates, passing standardized state tests, and overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the socioeconomic status of the students at the school.

Table 13

Correlations for the Percentage of Students Who Received Free/Reduced Lunch

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attendance	-.077	.273
Major Discipline	-.019	.784
Dropout Rate	.019	.790
Passing Standardized Tests	-.067	.342
Overall Feelings about PBIS	-.094	.178

Note. Scale: 1 = 0%-25%, 4 = 76%-100%

H5 said the greatest influence would be the relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school. The number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest influence for the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The following sections and multiple regression tables provide further information for H5.

Table 14 presents the regression for teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The highest level was years of PBIS at the school with a Beta of -.162. The second highest level was years of full time teaching at the school with a Beta of -.056. Based on $F(4, 200) = 1.573$, $p = .183$, $R\ 2 = .031$, the results were not significant.

Table 14

Regression for Teachers' Overall/General Feelings About PBIS

		Coefficients		
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
	Variable	B	Beta	Sig.
	(Constant)	2.362		.000
	Years full time teaching	-.005	-.056	.423
	Years of PBIS at the school	-.080	-.162	.077
	Highest Degree Earned	-.010	-.009	.899
(1)	Bachelor's (2) Master's			
(3)	Specialist (4) Doctorate			
	Free/Reduced Lunch	.005	.006	.950
(1)	0%-25% (2) 26%-50%			
	(3) 51%-75 % (4) 76%-100%			

Table 15 reflects the regression for the teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students' daily average attendance. The percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch had the highest Beta of -.090. The highest degree earned had the second highest Beta of -.070. The results of $F(4, 200) = .659$, $p = .621$, $R2 = .013$ were not significant.

Table 15

Regression for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Students' Daily Average Attendance

	Coefficients		
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Variable	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	3.749		.000
Years full time teaching	-.004	-.028	.691
Years of PBIS at the school	.007	.010	.911
Highest Degree Earned	-.106	-.070	.327
(1) Bachelor's (2) Master's			
(3) Specialist (4) Doctorate			
Free/Reduced Lunch	-.106	-.090	.326
(1) 0%-25% (2) 26%-50%			
(3) 51%-75 % (4) 76%-100%			

Table 16 contains the regression for teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected major discipline infractions (fighting, threats, etc.). The highest Beta was .146 for the years PBIS had been at the school, and the second highest Beta was -.088 for the percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch. By evaluating $F(4, 200) = .822$, $p = .513$, $R2 = .016$, the results were not significant.

Table 16

Regression for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Major Discipline Infractions (fighting, threats, etc.)

	Coefficients		
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Variable	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	3.676		.000
Years full time teaching	-.009	-.070	.327
Years of PBIS at the school	.103	.146	.115
Highest Degree Earned (1) Bachelor's (2) Master's (3) Specialist (4) Doctorate	-.029	-.019	.784
Free/Reduced Lunch (1) 0%-25% (2) 26%-50% (3) 51%-75 % (4) 76%-100%	-.104	-.088	.335

Table 17 displays the regression for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Dropout Rate. The highest Beta was -.105 for the highest degree earned. The second highest Beta was -.049 for the years of full time teaching at the school. The results were not significant based on $F(4, 200) = .731$, $p = .572$, $R2 = .014$.

Table 17

Regression for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Dropout Rate

	Coefficients		
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Variable	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	3.635		.000
Years full time teaching	-.006	-.049	.493
Years of PBIS at the school	.012	.018	.846
Highest Degree Earned	-.153	-.105	.138
(1) Bachelor's (2) Master's			
(3) Specialist (4) Doctorate			
Free/Reduced Lunch	.002	.002	.983
(1) 0%-25% (2) 26%-50%			
(3) 51%-75 % (4) 76%-100%			

Table 18 provides the regression for teachers' perception about whether PBIS affected students percentage passing standardized state tests. The percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch had the highest Beta of -.078. The highest degree earned had the second highest Beta of -.048. Based on $F(4, 200) = .291$, $p = .884$, $R2 = .006$, the results were not significant.

Table 18

Regression for Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affected Students Percentage Passing Standardized State Tests

	Coefficients		
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Variable	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	3.607		.000
Years full time teaching	.002	.015	.833
Years of PBIS at the school	.028	.039	.671
Highest Degree Earned	-.073	-.048	.502
(1) Bachelor's (2) Master's (3) Specialist (4) Doctorate			
Free/Reduced Lunch	-.092	-.078	.397
(1) 0%-25% (2) 26%-50% (3) 51%-75 % (4) 76%-100%			

Qualitative Data

The final portion of the survey allowed the teachers to share their opinion of what was the most successful PBIS strategy that had been implemented at their school. Of the 205 respondents, 28.7% (59) gave a reply to the open-ended question. Question #25

asked: In your opinion, what is the most successful PBIS strategy that has been implemented at your school. Table 19 provides an overview of what the teachers reported to be the most successful PBIS strategy.

Table 19

The Most Successful PBIS Strategy

Teacher Opinion Responses	Frequency	Percent
Renaissance card reward system (gold, silver, platinum, bronze, purple, white, no F League)	11	18.9
Renaissance Rallies per 9wks rewarding grades, behavior, and attendance	9	15.3
Praise referrals/positive behavioral referrals	9	15.3
Positive reinforcement/encouragement	7	11.9
Block parties	4	6.8
Zero demerit award	3	5.1
No F Parties	2	3.4
HAT (homework, attendance, no tardy parties)	2	3.4
Honor roll field trips	2	3.4

Table 19 (continued).

Teacher Opinion Responses	Frequency	Percent
Extra free time/break for students meeting goals	2	3.4
CHAMPS (Conversion, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation, and Success)	2	3.4
Behavior contracts	1	1.7
Field Day	1	1.7
Rewards away from school	1	1.7
Tutoring after school	1	1.7
T-shirts given to kids for special achievements	1	1.7
One on one contact with certain students to let them know that someone cares about them	1	1.7

Summary

All of the variables for this study were tested statistically. At the .05 level, there was a negative, statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to teachers' overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years PBIS had been at the school. Additionally, the number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest influence for the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. There were no other areas of statistical significance found in the study. Finally, the qualitative section of the study indicated most teachers found the Renaissance card

reward system (gold, silver, platinum, bronze, purple, white, no F League) to be the most effective PBIS strategy.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter V states the conclusions found from this study as they related to the literature review from Chapter II. Keeping this study's findings in mind, Chapter V also makes recommendations for how school leaders can utilize the results of this study to enhance their educational setting and ultimately increase their students' level of achievement. Limitations are presented as well. Based on the results of this study, Chapter V provides other researchers with suggestions for future research and literature to support the recommendations. Lastly, Chapter V ends with a comprehensive overview of this entire study.

Conclusions and Discussion

Using both quantitative and qualitative modes of measurement, the Boys Town Educational Model (BTEM) had been evaluated by its Research and Evaluation Department. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the level of impact the BTEM has had in schools regarding school violence (Furst, Criste, & Daly, 1995).

Just as the BTEM evaluation method involved quantitative and qualitative measures, this study used both as well. Based on the collected data, the results of this study answered five research questions. The following sections state the research questions, the findings for the questions, and how the findings relate to the literature review in Chapter II, and the conclusions that were drawn.

Research Question #1

Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school? H1 suggested there would be a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school. At the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS when correlated with the number of years of teaching experience at the school.

There was research which suggested when teachers were able to meet with other teachers and discuss their practices in both informal and formal manners, the teachers were able to participate in an exchange of ideas that enabled them to build better instructional programs for their students (Chrisman, 2005). This type of collaboration was used best when teachers were working on improving their instructional practices based on the achievement needs of their students (Chrisman, 2005). When teachers collaborated with each other, they met with both teachers of the same discipline and grade level (Balfanz, 2011). Also, school leaders should have assigned teachers tasks and teaching assignments that were doable; plus, teachers who taught core subjects should have continued to have the same students for at least a year's time (Balfanz, 2011).

Most of the teachers in this study had not been teaching very long; most teachers had been teaching from one up to six years. The least amount of teaching years was one while the maximum number of years teaching was thirty-one. There was reason to believe that since the majority of the teachers in this survey had not been teaching very long, maybe they had not had a chance to develop networking relationships within their departments and grade levels to have an impact on their perception of PBIS.

Furthermore, there could be cases in which teachers who had not been at the school very long were too overwhelmed with various school-related activities to have had a good perception of PBIS.

Research Question #2

Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school? H2 suggested there would be a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school. At the .05 level, there was a negative, statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years PBIS had been at the school. The questions on the instrument that gauged the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS were written in the negative. Therefore, the more years PBIS had been at the school actually indicated a positive perception of PBIS.

Christenson and Thurlow (2004) pointed out it takes time, planning, and evaluating to develop and maintain effective PBIS programs. Along those same lines, Walker et al. (2005a) also suggested schools should not even claim they have successful PBIS programs until they have been effectively using and evaluating their PBIS strategies for at least three years.

Based on the research regarding the number of years PBIS had been at the schools, it is reasonable to conclude that the results of this study somewhat contradict what the research suggested. According to the data for this study, the years PBIS had been at the schools ranged between one and five years. Most schools had only been using PBIS for one year; the second highest number of years of PBIS at schools was two

years. Even though most schools had only been using PBIS for one or two years, the level of statistical significance was still met despite not having the number of years as suggested in the literature.

Research Question #3

Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher? H3 indicated there would be a statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher. At the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS when correlated with the highest degree earned by the teacher. Regarding the highest degree earned, the majority of the teachers had received a bachelor's degree with those with a master's degree close behind. It was expected that not many teachers would hold a degree beyond a master's and still be in the classroom setting.

Although teachers may not need an advanced degree to effectively implement PBIS strategies and techniques, proper training, evaluation, and collaboration should occur. Principals can be of assistance by taking on the responsibility that such elements are taking place: providing the teachers with the resource materials and people they need especially for their academically-struggling students, keeping the sizes of the classes at a manageable number, placing teachers who meet the qualifications in their qualified subject domains, canvassing support from parents to establish a good relationship between home and school, and devising a mentor system that will enable each student to have at least one trusting relationship with a school official (Somers, et al., 2009).

It may be reasonable to assume that the level of degree did not have an impact on

teachers' perception on PBIS as the level of education does not influence PBIS as much as the proper training of PBIS does. The teachers in this study may not have had training or courses related to PBIS when they were in college; therefore, they did not have the educational experience related to PBIS. They would, as a result, have to rely on the PBIS training their educational leaders provide them. According to Thompson and Webber (2010), there is training based on social cognitive learning for educators to receive. With this in mind, it is fundamentally important for school leaders to provide teachers with PBIS training.

Research Question #4

Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school? H4 suggested there would be statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. At the .05 level, there was no statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS when correlated with the socioeconomic status of the students at the school.

According to Balfanz (2011), there were some high poverty schools that were tackling their dropout problems and other educational issues by using the Diplomas Now Model. This program was tested in many schools during 2009-10, and the results of the program were very positive. For instance, a high school in Chicago was able to get 92% of its students on target by their 10^{th} grade year.

Data from this study revealed there were no schools which had 0%-25% of their students receiving free or reduced lunch. The majority of the schools participating in the study had a rate of 51%-75% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch. Based on

these results, it was extremely common for the students in the schools for the study to receive free/reduced lunch. The socioeconomic status of the students did not impact the perception of PBIS probably because there was not enough differentiation between the number of students who did receive free/reduced lunch between the number of students who did not receive free/reduced lunch.

Chrisman (2005) described an urban elementary school with 95% of their students receiving free/reduced lunch. This school did not allow this challenge from improving their students' education. The teachers and the school leaders made necessary educational improvements to help their students succeed. Maybe to show a statistical significance, a greater percentage of students in the socioeconomic category of 0% - 25% was needed for this study.

Research Question #5

On which factor (the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) does the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence? H5 said the greatest influence will be the relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school. The number of years PBIS had been at the school did, in fact, have the greatest influence for the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS.

In Chapter V regarding the section for Research Question #2, there was literature that suggested the number of years (Walker, et al., 2005a) along with proper implementation and evaluation of the PBIS strategies were vital for the success of the PBIS program (Christenson and Thurlow, 2004). This study, having schools with mostly

only one or two years experience of PBIS still were able to provide the biggest impact. Again, it would be safe to assume that the few years the schools in this study had been using PBIS were having a big impact at their schools.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Research indicated that many times, school leaders implemented what they believed to be positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) for their students; yet, they failed to evaluate the effects of the behavioral, social, and academic intervention strategies (Cook, et al., 2007). To determine their credibility, the PBIS systems needed to be analyzed; if they were not, this lack of evaluation created disconnects that could negatively impact students (Cook, et al., 2007).

Although all of the research questions for this study did not prevail with statistically significant results, school leaders still can use the data from the significant outcome and greatest influence to enhance the current practices of their teachers and ultimately improve their students' achievement rates. There is literature that indicated although the results of a study were non-significant, the information gained from the study was still important. In support of that information, Thompson and Webber (2010) described a study of a PBIS program that did not produce statistically significant results; however, the study did reveal better school-related relationships between teachers and their students were formed. Moreover, there was evidence of few discipline referrals and suspensions.

The results of this research study did, however, reveal there was a negative, statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years PBIS had been at

the school. A suggested reason for this negative, statistically significant relationship is the questions on the instrument that gauged the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS were written in the negative. Therefore, the results actually indicated teachers had a positive perception of PBIS. According to research, Oregon's First Step to Success intervention program utilized a teacher perception component during the evaluation of the program (Walker, et al., 2005b). The results of the perception segment did suggest the teachers had a positive attitude towards the First Step Success program.

Since teachers have a direct and continuous form of interaction with their students, evaluating the perception that teachers have regarding PBIS is a vital element to having a successful PBIS experience (Gorgueiro, 2008). For example, on a regular basis, the results of the Boys Town Educational Model (BTEM) evaluations are assessed. The evaluations have repeatedly suggested such positive successes as a lower number of discipline incidents, better behavior from students, and a positive conviction from the teachers (McNeese, 1999).

Administrators may find it problematic if the teachers' perception of the school's PBIS system is a negative one. If the teachers' perception happens to be negative and the administrators do not address this issue, then the students will suffer. It would be tragic if administrators erroneously asserted the PBIS methods at their schools were having a tremendous, positive impact on the students when the perception of the teachers was totally opposite. If school leaders knew the perception teachers had about PBIS, then they would be able to adjust and/or maintain the strengths or weaknesses of their PBIS strategies. Because teachers will be the frontrunners of PBIS at their schools, it is vital to gauge their perception of PBIS since their perception will influence their students'

(Gorgueiro, 2008). The schools that are willing to do self-assessments will see growth in their students' levels of learning. When the self-assessments identify areas which call for improvement or factors which need to be adjusted, all of the school leaders and educators must be open and willing to change (Chrisman, 2005).

Another important finding to be pointed out from this study is the number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest influence for the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. Given the results of this study, the more years PBIS had been at the schools tended to indicate a greater amount of appreciation for the program and its intervention strategies. With administrators knowing this information, they will be able to devise a program that truly addresses the needs of their students. If students' needs are met, they will be better prepared to thrive academically. The essential goal that administrators possess is to have students who achieve academic success. Students are oftentimes led to levels of success by way of varying intervention strategies.

There was a lot of research that supported evaluating PBIS programs, and it would seem that administrators would do as the literature suggested. Christenson and Thurlow (2004) suggested these programs needed an extensive evaluation to determine if these dropout prevention programs were truly getting students to attend school on a regular basis and not dropping out of school. With such strict federal guidelines, it is imperative the dropout prevention decisions educational leaders make are supported experimentally and researched heavily (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004).

Limitations

This study only included Mississippi public school teachers in levels kindergarten through twelfth grade. Future researchers may want to include teachers from various

states. Even though this study contained a good representation of Mississippi public school teachers, future research possibly may involve a more varied group in an effort to gauge the perception of other states' teachers. The next researcher may consider comparing the responses of teachers from various states.

Another aspect for a future researcher is to consider adding different types of schools. This study only targeted public schools. It may be interesting to analyze the data that involved a range of both public and private schools in relation to PBIS and teachers' perceptions.

This study did not focus on a specific type of PBIS program at the schools as there are various forms of PBIS. Considering there are different PBIS programs, the researcher was limited with discovering the fidelity of the PBIS program at each school.

For this study, there was limited variability in areas such as the percentage of students who received free/reduced lunch, degree earned by teachers, and the number of years PBIS had been at the school.

Recommendations for Future Research

There has been a "national movement toward universal, classroom, and individual management systems provided by the schoolwide positive behavior support (SWPBS) system" in the past ten years; in addition to that, SWPBS has allowed school leaders and teachers to handle behavioral issues "in a proactive and positive manner" (Thompson & Webber, 2010, p. 72).

This study did not concern itself with gauging the fidelity of the schools' PBIS intervention strategies. As the success of Oregon's First Step Program was mentioned earlier, had the program been instituted ineffectively, then undoubtedly, the goals of the

program would not have been met. If the program had been properly executed and monitored, then those who participated in the intervention should have exhibited positive outcomes (Walker, et al., 2005b). Future researchers who are interested in investigating teachers' perception with reference to PBIS might consider exploring the level of commitment in which the strategies were introduced, implemented, and evaluated at their school. Another researcher may discover schools that reported poor implementation of PBIS may have had poor perceptions of PBIS, whereas teachers at schools with effective implementation may have indicated a more positive perception of PBIS. To determine the fidelity, the researcher may ask questions regarding program implementation.

A future researcher may consider exploring the negative, statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years PBIS had been at the school. The instrument for this study had the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS written in a negative manner; therefore, the more years PBIS had been at the school actually indicated a positive perception of PBIS. As a result of that finding, another researcher may decide to explore the impact of having PBIS at schools for a longer period of time. Research could be conducted to determine why having PBIS a certain number of years at schools gives teachers a positive outlook on PBIS. The maximum number of years PBIS had been at the schools in this study was five; most of the schools had only been using PBIS for one or two years, though.

The researcher found studies related to the length of time PBIS had been implemented at their schools. Christenson and Thurlow (2004) indicated school-completion programs should be developed over time; it takes time for an effective

program to be fully implemented, and the efforts of the intervention strategies should be individualist for the best results for the students. B. Walker et al. (2005) described a study conducted on three schools deemed as having successfully implemented PBS in their schools. Schools are considered successfully implementing PBS if they have been effectively using the PBS intervention strategies for at least three years.

Considering this information, a future researcher might conduct a study of only schools with at least three years of implementation. The researcher could evaluate the successes of schools that have had PBIS for at least three years. The researcher also could include a comment section on the researcher's instrument which would allow for the teachers to include why they have such a positive overall/general feeling regarding PBIS.

For this study, teachers were asked an open-ended question about what they thought was the best PBIS strategy at their school. Most teachers indicated the Renaissance reward card system to be the best. *Jostens Renaissance* (2003) pointed out the nationally-documented Renaissance Program is a form of PBIS that wants to help students improve their behavior, attendance, and grades.

A future researcher may consider asking the teachers to explain why they indicated the strategy they selected was the best. With this information, the researcher then would be able to evaluate and draw conclusions from the teachers' comments in the open-ended section.

A final recommendation is for a future researcher to possibly consider expanding the variability of this study. For example, schools in the 0%-25% range of students receiving free/reduced lunch should be included in the study next time because most

schools in this study were in the 51%-75% range of students who received free/reduced lunch.

Summary

As indicated in Chapter I of this study, the state of education has been altered since former President George W. Bush and his administrative team authorized the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (NCLB, 2002). Upon establishment, the intent of NCLB (2002) was to hold schools accountable for every student, despite the race, learning challenge, or financial situation of the student; every student should still be provided a top-notch education and make academic strides (Styron & Nyman, 2008). According to NCLB (2002) the initial constraints specified by the 2013-2014 school term, "all students must be at the proficient level or above;" this requirement must be met "for schools and districts to avoid sanctions" (Linn, 2005, p. 9).

Current literature revealed "in 2003, no state or large district had anything close to 100% of their students performing at the basic level, much less the proficient level at either grade 4 or grade 8 in either reading or mathematics" (Linn, 2005, p. 14). Recently, President Barack Obama decided to eliminate various components of NCLB (2002). One of the elements President Obama is willing to waive is the 2014 sanction providing the states follow the revised mandates of NCLB (2002). President Obama wants to give states more control of its educational achievements instead of states being under such stringent and sometimes unrealistic educational guidelines (Dillon, 2011; Resmovits, 2011).

NCLB (2002) has not been completely or totally taken away; there are still several facets of NCLB (2002) which are still in place and should be observed until either

Secretary of Education Duncan waives a state from a provision, or the law is revamped altogether (Dillon, 2011). With that in mind, the research for this study continued on the basis that NCLB (2002) is still in effect as Mississippi was not a state that applied for and received a waiver, and the participants in this study are Mississippi teachers (Feller & Hefling, 2012).

Oftentimes, without assessing the effects of the behavioral, social, and academic intervention strategies, school leaders implement what they perceive to be an effective positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) for their students (Cook, et al., 2007). To determine their credibility, the PBIS systems need to be reviewed in some manner; if they are not assessed, this lack of evaluation creates disconnects that could negatively impact students (Cook et al., 2007). This study called for school leaders to evaluate their school's PBIS by gauging teachers' perceptions of PBIS.

The purpose of this study was to investigate Mississippi K-12 teachers' perception of positive behavior intervention regarding the following outcomes of students: daily average attendance, major discipline incidents (fighting, verbal and non verbal threats, and articles prohibited in school such as tobacco and alcohol products), dropout rates, and the percentage of students passing standardized state tests. Even though President Obama made recent changes to NCLB (2002), schools are still being held to high standards and must show evidence of how they are improving their students' achievement gaps and the like (Dillon, 2011). This study was needed because school leaders are constantly researching to determine the tactics that are implemented at schools that have sustainable student achievement. With the legislation of NCLB (2002), many principals are under a heavy amount of pressure to achieve and maintain student

achievement; consequently, principals need research-based data that will help them with their quest for greater student achievement (Chrisman, 2005).

As presented in Chapter II, this study was grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which indicates unless people believe they can give the outcome that is desired, they will not have the motivation to strive to meet the intended goal (Bandura, 2001). School districts and even some states have been implementing some form of positive behavior support (PBS) or positive behavior intervention support (PBIS). Furthermore, "schools have found that PBIS provides a comprehensive model for implementation of a continuum of interventions that result in better outcomes for students" (Anderson-Kechmark & Alvarez, 2010, p. 61).

There was an abundant amount of literature that described various positive behavior intervention support methods that schools use to improve student achievement. For example, Marzano (2003) created a What Works in Schools model. In Marzano's model, he pinpoints particular "factors that are primary determinants of student achievement" (Pool, 2005, p. 96). The review of literature for this study included a focus on school climate, school culture, efficacy, motivation theory, RTI, PBIS, dropout prevention, and the perception teachers have regarding PBIS.

As described in Chapters III and IV, the methodology for this study included a correlational research design. The participants were a random sample of public school teachers throughout the state of Mississippi. They were K-12 public school teachers who taught at a school which used some form of PBIS. Of the 300 surveys that were distributed, 68.3 % (205) of the teachers completely filled out and returned their surveys.

Six surveys that were returned were not considered for the study as the respondents skipped the final page of the survey.

The instrument used for the study was created by the researcher and was entitled Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Survey. The instrument consisted of thirty-two questions with three parts to it. The first part contained seven demographic questions as they pertained to the participants' gender, age, classification of the school, years of full-time teaching experience with the school, years PBIS had been at the school, highest degree earned, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. The second part had five segments which posed questions regarding teachers' perceptions about whether PBIS affected students' daily average attendance, students' major discipline infractions (fighting, threats, etc.), students' dropout rate, percentage of students passing standardized state tests, and the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The final section of the survey asked the participants an open-ended question about what they viewed to be the most successful PBIS strategy that had been implemented at their school.

This study was primarily quantitative in nature by using qualitative methods first and then a multiple linear regression. Data was input using a current SPSS computer software program. When conducting the multiple linear regressions, a linear relationship was checked for between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables.

For this study, the dependent variable was the perception that the teachers had concerning PBIS. The independent variables were as follows: years of full-time teaching experience with the school, years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned

by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school. The data from this study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years of teaching experience at the school?

RQ2 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the number of years PBIS had been at the school?

RQ3 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the highest degree earned by the teacher?

RQ4 Is there a relationship between the perception of PBIS and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school?

RQ5 On which factor (the number of years of teaching experience at the school, the number of years PBIS had been at the school, the highest degree earned by the teacher, and the socioeconomic status of the students at the school) does the perception of PBIS have the greatest amount of influence?

A validity questionnaire was given to a small panel of experts, and the questionnaire achieved validity. After IRB approved the study, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study presented good reliabilities.

After the completion of the pilot study, superintendent letters were distributed to request consent to conduct the study at schools within their district. Once the superintendents gave their consent, principals were presented with a request to conduct the study at their schools. The surveys were presented to the participants in the following manners: the researcher or a designated employer of that school/district went on campus

and delivered and retained surveys, and the surveys were mailed to the school for the secretaries to distribute to the participants.

Statistically, all of the variables for this study were tested. At the .05 level, there was a negative, statistically significant relationship between the perception of PBIS as it related to teachers' overall/general PBIS feelings when correlated with the number of years PBIS had been at the school. The questions on the instrument that gauged the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS were written in the negative. Therefore, the more years PBIS had been at the school actually indicated a positive perception of PBIS. In addition to that, the number of years PBIS had been at the school had the greatest influence for the teachers' overall/general feelings about PBIS. The study did not include any other areas of statistical significance. On the qualitative section of the survey, the teachers remarked the most effective PBIS strategy was the Renaissance card reward system (gold, silver, platinum, bronze, purple, white, no F League). Although all of the research questions did not present statistically significant results, there were findings that would benefit school leaders as they strive to improve the achievement of their students.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER PERCEPTION SURVEY

Teacher Perceptions of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Survey
By voluntarily completing this survey to collect data for research for a dissertation at The University of Southern Mississippi, you acknowledge your consent; your responses shall be confidential. Thank you for completing this survey. Return to the designated person or mail in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

Part I

The following Items Concern Demographic Information.

Directions: For each category, please circle your responses.

1. Gender**:** Male Female

2. Age: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50 or above

3. Your school of employment is classified as a(n):

   Elementary Middle High

4. Years of full-time teaching experience with this school:

   _____

5. Years Positive Behavior Intervention Support had been at this school:

   _____

6. Highest degree earned:

   Bachelor's Master's Specialist Doctorate

7. What percentage of students at your school receives free or reduced lunch?

   ____0%-25% ____26%-50% ____51%-75% ____ 76%-100%

Part II

The Following Items Concern Teachers' Perceptions of PBIS .

Directions: For each item, circle the number that indicates the strength of your agreement about your school on a scale of:

	1 None	2 Very Little	3 Some	4 Quite a Bit	5 A Lot
I. Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affects Students' Daily Average Attendance					
1. How much impact has PBIS had on motivating students to attend school on a regular basis?	1	2	3	4	5
2. What influence does PBIS have on motivating students not to check out before the school day has ended?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How much impact has PBIS had on encouraging students to arrive to school on time each day?	1	2	3	4	5
II. Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affects Major Discipline Infractions (fighting, threats, etc.)					
4. How much impact has PBIS had on disruptive behavior such as fighting while at school?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How much impact has PBIS had on motivating students to behave while at school?	1	2	3	4	5
6. What impact has PBIS had on students maintaining good behavior while at school?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How much influence has PBIS had on students following the rules of the school?	1	2	3	4	5

III. Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affects Dropout Rate					
8. How much impact has PBIS had on motivating all students to remain in school?	1	2	3	4	5
9. What influence has PBIS had on encouraging students with low interest in school to remain in school?	1	2	3	4	5
10. How much impact has PBIS had on motivating high-achieving students to remain in school?	1	2	3	4	5
11. What is the impact that PBIS has had average students to remain in school?	1	2	3	4	5
IV. Teachers' Perception About Whether PBIS Affects Students Percentage Passing Standardized State Tests					
12. How much influence has PBIS had on students demonstrating an interest in their school subjects?	1	2	3	4	5
13. PBIS has motivated students to come to school eager to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
14. How much impact has PBIS had on motivating students to believe they can be successful in their school subjects?	1	2	3	4	5
15. What impact has PBIS had on the value that students place on their education?	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: For each item, circle the number that indicates the strength of your agreement about your school on a scale of:					
	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
V. Teachers' Overall/General Feelings About PBIS					
16. PBIS has created a negative environment of the culture of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The process of learning at school is now difficult because of PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Students do not want to attend school because of PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The school's environment has not improved with PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
20. PBIS has limited the number of major disciplinary problems of students while a school.	1	2	3	4	5
21. PBIS does have an impact on students' learning while at school.	1	2	3	4	5
22. PBIS has impacted all types of students.	1	2	3	4	5
23. PBIS only focuses on select groups of students.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I have good thoughts about PBIS.	1	2	3	4	5

Part III

Best PBIS Strategy

25. In your opinion, what is the most successful PBIS strategy that has been implemented at your school?_____

_____

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

The risks to subjects are minimized.
The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
The selection of subjects is equitable.
Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **11110202**
PROJECT TITLE**: Teacher Perceptions Regarding Behavior Intervention Support**
PROJECT TYPE**: Dissertation**
RESEARCHER/S**: LaWanda J.S. Thornton**
COLLEGE/DIVISION**: College of Education & Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & School Counseling**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION**: Expedited Review Approval**
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: **11/17/2011 to 11/16/2012**

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

APPENDIX C

SUPERINTENDENT CONSENT LETTER

[redacted] School District

[redacted]
Superintendent of Education

[redacted]

[redacted]
Assistant Superintendent

October 27, 2011

LaWanda S. Thornton
323 Oak Park Drive
Pass Christian, MS 39571

Ref: Dissertation Permission

Dear Ms. Thornton:

As Superintendent of [redacted] School District, I grant permission for you to use the schools in the [redacted] School District for your dissertation on looking to analyze teachers' perceptions of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS). It is my understanding that this research is to raise awareness of the importance of evaluating a school's PBIS and with such an assessment, school leaders are able to identify which areas they may need to adjust in an effort to increase the achievement levels of their students.

If I may of further assistance, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Superintendent

[redacted]

RECEIVED
OCT 27 2011

LaWanda S. Thornton
323 Oak Park Drive
Pass Christian, MS 39571
(228) 424-2923
lthornton08@yahoo.com

October 25, 2011

[redacted]

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) under the direction of Dr. Ronald Styron. The intent of this letter is to ask for permission to gather research data from the schools in your district. The information gathered will be used in my dissertation at USM, shared with my dissertation committee, and considered for possible publication in an educational journal.

The research is looking to analyze teachers' perceptions of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS). The data to be gathered will be kept confidential in a safe location in the researcher's home with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participants' responses. No teacher, school, or district will be signaled out or identified. The research will not interfere with any classroom instruction or be a distraction to the school. Completing the survey will take less than 10 minutes. I plan to begin collecting this data in November 2011 and be completed by May 2012. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. All surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by shredder after the study has been completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of the importance of evaluating a school's PBIS. With such an assessment, school leaders are able to identify which areas they may need to adjust in an effort to increase the achievement levels of their students.

I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Human Subjects Committee at USM. "This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

Thank you for your time, and I hope you will grant me permission to collect the necessary data from the schools in your district by either my attending a faculty meeting to distribute and collect my survey or allowing a designated employee to do so on my behalf. By signing and returning this letter in the enclosed self-addressed envelope, you hereby grant your permission.

Sincerely,
LaWanda S. Thornton
LaWanda S. Thornton

Superintendent's Signature [redacted]

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Sincerely,

LaWanda S. Thornton

LaWanda S. Thornton

Superintendent's Signature [redacted]

APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL CONSENT LETTER

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323 Oak Park Drive
Pass Christian, MS 39571
(228) 424-2923
lthornton08@yahoo.com

November 28, 2011

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LaWanda S. Thornton

LaWanda S. Thornton

Principal's Signature [redacted]

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LaWanda S. Thornton

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December 2, 2011

[redacted]

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The research is looking to analyze teachers' perceptions of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS). The data to be gathered will be kept confidential in a safe location in the researcher's home with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participants' responses. No teacher, school, or district will be signaled out nor identified. The research will not interfere with any classroom instruction or be a distraction to the school. I plan to begin collecting this data in November 2011 and be completed by May 2012. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. All surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by shredder after the study has been completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of the importance of evaluating a school's PBIS. With such an assessment, school leaders are able to identify which areas they may need to adjust in an effort to increase the achievement levels of their students.

I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Human Subjects Committee at USM. "This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

Thank you for your time, and I hope you will grant me permission to collect the necessary data from your school by either my attending a faculty meeting to distribute and collect my survey or allowing a designated employee to do so on my behalf. By signing and returning this letter in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope, you hereby grant your permission.

Sincerely,

LaWanda S. Thornton

LaWanda S. Thornton

Principal's Signature [redacted]

LaWanda S. Thornton
323 Oak Park Drive
Pass Christian, MS 39571
(228) 424-2923
lthornton08@yahoo.com

November 28, 2011

[redacted]

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) under the direction of Dr. Ronald Styron. Although your superintendent has granted me authorization, the intent of this letter is to ask for permission from you to gather research data from your school. The information gathered will be used in my dissertation at USM, shared with my dissertation committee, and considered for possible publication in an educational journal.

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The research is looking to analyze teachers' perceptions of positive behavior intervention support systems (PBIS). The data to be gathered will be kept confidential in a safe location in the researcher's home with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participants' responses. No teacher, school, or district will be signaled out nor identified. The research will not interfere with any classroom instruction or be a distraction to the school. I plan to begin collecting this data in November 2011 and be completed by May 2012. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. All surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by shredder after the study has been completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of the importance of evaluating a school's PBIS. With such an assessment, school leaders are able to identify which areas they may need to adjust in an effort to increase the achievement levels of their students.

I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Human Subjects Committee at USM. "This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

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Sincerely,

LaWanda S. Thornton

LaWanda S. Thornton

Principal's Signature [redacted]

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

LaWanda S. Thornton
123 Oak Park Drive
Pass Christian, MS 39571
(228) 424-2923
lthornton08@yahoo.com

December 5, 2011

Dear Teacher:

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) under the direction of Dr. Ronald Styron. The intent of this letter is to ask you to complete the Teacher Perception of Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) survey. The information gathered will be used in my dissertation at USM, shared with my dissertation committee, and considered for possible publication in an educational journal.

The research is looking to analyze teachers' perception of (PBIS). The data to be gathered will be kept confidential in a safe location in the researcher's home with only the researcher and committee members having access to the participants' responses. No teacher, school, or district will be signaled out nor identified. The research will not interfere with any classroom instruction or be a distraction to the school. Completing the survey will take less than 10 minutes. I plan to begin collecting this data in November 2011 and be completed by May 2012. Participation is completely voluntary; participation may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. All surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by shredder after the study has been completed. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of the importance of evaluating a school's PBIS. With such an assessment, school leaders are able to identify which areas they may need to adjust in an effort to increase the achievement levels of their students.

I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Human Subjects Committee at USM. "This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

Thank you for your time. You may complete and return the survey by giving it to me or the designated employee or by mailing it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

LaWanda S. Thornton

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